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Author, Author!

THEODORE L. THOMAS is an occasional writer, whose stories are usually remembered for many months after their appearance. His most recent appearances have been "The Disappearing Man", in the July *Science Fiction Stories*, and "The Attractive Nuisance" in the August *Science Fiction Quarterly*.

THOMAS N. SCORTIA is a chemist by profession, who finds himself torn between sanity and the desire to make writing his sole career. His profession forms the basis for a notable short novel, "Genius Loci", in the September *Science Fiction Stories*.

ROBERT SILVERBERG seems to be living up to his accolade as the "most promising new writer of 1956", as, in addition to numerous short stories and novelets, all of notable quality, he's now to be found in pocket book novels, as well as in topflight detective and western story magazines.

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER is a British author, well known for unusual and wryly humorous tales. His list of credits would fill quite a few pages.

ISAAC ASIMOV needs no introduction; he's just one of the brightest of those science fiction stars that every science fiction editor is constantly seeking.

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CAT O' NINE TALES

by Thomas N. Scortia

illustrated by FREAS

Something was broadcasting the secret thoughts of men, feeding their hidden fear and guilt back to them, amplified. It was like the brainwashing methods of the alien Troats, but far, far worse.

SIX MONTHS to the day after he had assumed command of the eight man picket ship *Abalon,* Lt. (JG) LeFarge blew out his brains with his own ceremonial revolver. His second, Ensign Hartmann, found him in the dispensary, floating amid the debris of his own self-destruction and the splintered fragments of the ancient 30mm pistol which had exploded in the very act of destroying its owner.

Five days later, the Quartermaster ship received his grey body in its issue plastic case, ticketed and coded like some inanimate piece of equipment.

Lt. Goetering, LeFarge's replacement, watched from the hold port of the QM ship until the transfer was complete, and wondered how many more grey plastic-enclosed things would make the same sort of trip before the war with the *Troats* was at an end.

As soon as the transfer was completed, Goetering rode the shuttle, carrying the *Abalon's* fuel and food rations for the next month, across the quarter mile of separation to the waiting picket ship. A taped whistle, sounding on the small ship's inter-com, piped him aboard and to the bridge where Ensign Hartmann reported.

AS THE QM ship blasted far aport, Goetering asked, "What happened to LeFarge?"

"Well..." Ensign Hartmann

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LaFarge couldn't stand his guilt any longer, and took the only avenue of escape there was.

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ventured, "you know how things happen."

"That's hardly an answer," Goetering said stiffly.

Ensign Hartmann stood silently. He seemed to be listening for something. "LeFarge was always rather moody."

When Goetering started to say something else, Hartmann said, "That's the K Force, isn't it?" He gestured at the faded patch on Goetering's right shoulder with the "K" and "F" sprawled across a thick circle. The thread forming the insignia was frayed and discolored compared with its mate with the bright V Picket Fleet insignia on Goetering's left shoulder.

"That's right," Goetering said, coloring. "I was one of the survivors."

"Then you're one of the few to see those butchers close at hand."

Butchers? Goetering thought. Hate-love-agony blending. Could he ever forget that two months? "I was a prisoner for two months, until they sent me and the other four back with their message."

Message: You are vermin we cannot tolerate. We will wipe you out and try to forget the filth that you are.

"I saw quite a bit of them," he said.

"And the others, the rest of the fifth?"

"The lucky ones...dead. You know what the *Troats* do with prisoners." He felt sick, wherever he went. If they could forget...

"I'm going to my quarters," he said. "Wake me at the end of this watch."

HARTMANN NODDED absently and saluted. Goetering left him on the bridge, staring at the air in front of him as though listening. It wasn't until the metal door of his tiny cabin slid softly shut behind him that Goetering remembered he had failed to meet any of the other members of his new command.

He unbuckled the ceremonial revolver at his side and stared at it moodily. LeFarge, he wondered, what sort of a man was he? Younger than he, of course. (No one bothered to ask why Goetering was still a Lieutenant, not after seeing the frayed K. F. patch. Everyone knew what had happened to the men the enemy had released.)

He pressed the button that lowered the bunk and threw himself on it. Well, he could understand it in a way—at least the impulse. Lord, the times when he had wanted to end his own life. And not for the reasons the brass thought.

"Give him a line command, an easy one," they said. "The *Troats* did something to him.

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But we need men in the line. We have to use him, him and the others."

If they had known the whole story...

...of endless horror and self-loathing...

He almost sobbed aloud at the intensity of the memory. *...and smothering black hatred, hatred you can drown in ...and the fostered awareness of massive power...of untouchable force...*

"Oh, God," he said aloud. They were in his mind... again!

HE SAT erect, feeling the horror wash over him and...

...image of love, of strength whom I shall hate...and love with a cruelty that I destroy and...

"No, I've killed him once already."

...to burn in sin-bright flame to the end of eternity... screaming at the fire of revenge in my hand...

Goetering pushed from the bunk, opened the door and stumbled into the passageway. Then, awareness returning, he returned, donned the parts of his uniform which he had discarded, and made his way to the bridge.

Hartmann and another man, the Warrant officer, were speaking in low tones when he entered. On the far side of the bridge, two enlisted men worked at the console of the long distance mass detector.

Hartmann looked at him curiously and introduced the other officer as Mr. Marvin.

"Welcome aboard, sir," Marvin said uneasily and Goetering realized that his face must still mirror the fear he had felt minutes before.

HE STRAIGHTENED his body and stared into Hartmann's jet eyes. After a moment the boy looked away, his thin shoulders hunching slightly. Marvin moved away and bent his head in study of the chart the two men were plotting with the detector.

"How did you sleep?" Hartmann asked.

"I didn't."

Hartmann paused in indecision. "I didn't think you would."

"What do you mean?"

"I suppose I should have showed you when you first came on board."

He led Goetering from the bridge and down the central passageway. They stopped before a door marked "Dispensary."

"You must understand," Hartmann said slowly, "we didn't know what to do about this. It...well, LeFarge kept the things and there just wasn't

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any way to decide after he died."

"What are you talking about?" Goetering demanded.

"LeFarge called it *Gumbo Ya-Ya*. That's Creole for 'everybody talks together' or something like that."

"I'm not very good at puzzles, Mister."

"Here," Hartmann said, opening the door.

THE CENTER of the room was dominated by a transparent plastic case bolted to one of the equipment tables. Below the table were a series of oxygen bottles connected with plastic tubes to the enclosure. On the side of the enclosure were two thin metal rods and a rheostat which Goetering recognised as a makeshift thermostat.

Inside the improvised incubator...

...like that when I killed him with fire...father!

"My God," Goetering said. "What is it?"

"Gumbo Ya-Ya," Hartmann said. "LeFarge thought the name was amusing."

Inside the transparent case four small kittens with blind eyes attacked the breasts of their mother. The larger cat was a perfectly ordinary tabby of indeterminant origin, Maltese-striped and sleek, with the well-fed look of a ship's mascot.

At first glance, the kittens seemed equally ordinary. There were four small bundles of fur with matted faces and greedy mouths that mewed and pulled at distended nipples.

But there was something wrong with the color of one.

IT WAS THE runt of the litter, Goetering saw, but its fur was thick and silky, with a brilliant orange-yellow coloration. There were other differences, too; the head was overly large, while the tufted ears were sharp with a clipped feral look.

Then he saw thin white fangs protruding from the mouth and he saw the faintest touch of red about then. The thing, he realized, was not drawing milk from the mother.

"The creature's a parasite," Hartmann said. "It can't manufacture its own red corpuscles, so it has to depend on the mother for both food and air. The fangs aren't teeth, they're mesodermal in origin, an extension of the cervical arteries. That's the reason for the highly oxygenated air. The mother wouldn't have enough without it, and the mutant would die."

Goetering stared at the blind thing, drinking its mother's blood. Only it wasn't drinking, he realized. As he watched,

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twin feathery antennae lifted and writhed like small snakes.

...they did it...with love and hate and the pain that wouldn't go away until...my hands...my burning murderer's hands...

Involuntarily Goetering gasped.

"It's a little frightening at first," Hartmann said. "Not telepathy, really. More of a personal feedback—as though the thing received a man's secret thoughts and retransmitted them. Everyone gets something different."

...his face, screaming... charring with bright flame...

"It started before they were born," Hartmann was saying. "LeFarge built the incubator when the x-rays showed what he had. The first viable deep-space mutation he'd ever seen, he said."

"I want that thing killed."

"We can't do that," Hartmann said.

"Can't you see? This is why LeFarge killed himself."

"Perhaps," Hartmann said, "but we can't kill it. Orders."

"Orders?"

"Base is sending a ship to pick them...it up."

"I want that creature killed. I'll take the responsibility."

"No," Hartmann said. "Look, you know the *Troats*. We've held them for a decade, falling back, regrouping. We've held this same line for three years with our picket ship defense in depth. But we're losing; in the end, they'll wipe us out."

GOETERING NODDED, remembering. "Because," he said, "they can't allow another intelligent race to exist."

"Egoists. That's why they sent you and the others back to tell us that they were coming to destroy us."

And they almost did, Goetering thought. He'd tried to give warning of the danger, but who would believe. Telepathy? It had been proved that the energy requirements for telepathy were impossible to a living organism. The enemy would have to fight their battles in the same manner the Earthmen did...with great battle machines that could think and act a thousand times faster than organic brains.

Besides, Goetering himself insisted that the effective range of *Troat* telepathy was only about a hundred thousand miles—well within the range of a detector. So what was the advantage? The enemy couldn't reach the important minds, directing the battle far to the rear.

But the *Troats* were more than mere telepaths. Goetering and the others could have told what to expect. Baily,

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Cammeron, the Gamble brothers...all had to be kept under constant sedation. No one knew what had happened to them. And who would listen to their ravings, the ravings of madmen?

And Goetering? He could not tell. It had taken two months to break him, but his captors found the lever. Control was complete. He knew what would happen when the Earth ships contacted the enemy; he tightened into a knot when he thought of it, and the other horror, and he could not speak.

HE HAD TO live with the knowledge of the imminent destruction of his own race. Living and thinking with hate and love and loathing of those sadistic minds that had vowed death to men. And in the end...

"Every time a *Troat* ship approaches our lines, you know what happens," Hartmann said.

Agony, mind-splitting agony ...and death. Impossible to fight; impossible to feed data to the programming machines. The ships could be fought from remote positions if the crew survived long enough to release control. But the ship was lost ...inevitably.

"We're losing. We fight them with the picket ships. Base remote-controls us like puppets. It's a bad solution, though. They're getting through, driving us back. And in the end..."

And they will come to destroy this mind which they would not let die before...

"An enemy ship tried to break through this sector eight days ago," Hartmann said.

"Here? In this sector?" Goetering demanded.

"That creature drove them off," Hartmann said. "Don't ask me how. Maybe it fed them back a dose of the poison of their own minds. We received some of the echoes of it on board."

He paused.

"It wasn't nice," he said after a moment. "I think it drove the *Troats* mad."

"And then LeFarge killed himself."

"We'd have all been dead," Hartmann said.

Goetering looked at the mindless thing in the incubator, its thin sharp teeth gleaming whitely as it devoured its mother's life.

AFTER THE watch, Goetering returned to his cabin and tried to sleep; but his mind was filled with a nagging fear of the thing in the dispensery. He remembered his first experiences with the telepathic *Troats,* and the horror of finding someone...something in

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his mind, probing, seeking each memory of scarred emotion, each flaw, every weakness.

Of course, it was not the same with the creature in the dispensery. A single mutation doesn't elevate the intelligence of a lower animal. The creature was as mindless as a recording, only receiving the hidden impulses of a man's mind and sending them back.

Yes, sending them back, but with an incredible intensity.

Gumbo Ya-Ya. LeFarge must have been completely mad... to live with a thing like that and to invent pet names for it. *Gumbo Ya-Ya.* Gutteral and primitive-sounding; like something from the depths of Africa—terrifying in its primitive mindlessness.

He waited, wondering when that idiot mind would again begin its assault. What had the creature repeated to LeFarge? What had there been in LeFarge's mind that he could not live with?

The others didn't know. At least, Hartmann said that *he* didn't know. But would Hartmann tell if he did?

GOETERING sat up and felt blindly for the light switch panel. What if the others *did* know? he thought fearfully. What if the others could hear what the creature found in his mind?

For the first time, he realized that he must have been dozing and that the wall communicator was buzzing insistently. He pressed the "open" button and Hartmann's voice said, "Lt. Goetering, can you come to the bridge? Important."

He found Hartmann and Mr. Marvin standing silently, waiting for him. There was no mistaking the fear in their eyes. Hartmann silently handed him a message flimsy.

"This is impossible," he said after reading the paper.

"No mistake," Hartmann said. "There's a *Troat* ship bound inward for our sector."

"We've never had a warning before."

"It didn't molest the point ship that sent the alarm," Mr. Marvin said. "And it's just one ship, not a fleet."

"What shall we do?" Hartmann asked.

"Do?"

Do? What could they do? There was no precedent. The *Troat* ship wouldn't be within detector range for thirty-six hours yet. No Earth ship had ever had such an advance warning of the approach of the enemy. Two... three hours, yes. Barely time enough to throw control to automatic before the crew became mindless things, incapable of any action.

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BUT HE would see the *Troats* again, Goetering knew. They'd know him...and they wouldn't kill him. No, they wouldn't destroy a tool they could control so perfectly. For, of all those aboard the *Abalon*, only he had ever talked with the enemy, had known the cold minds of the aliens. The very contact had driven a dozen K. F. men insane.

I'll kill myself first, he thought, *before the endless nightmare of cold fingers in my mind*...and the oppressive guilt of the thing he had done, the horror of...

...hate, searing hate that made your stomach a knot of raw tissue...and his face dissolving in fire...

For a moment, he thought that the enemy was already upon them. Then he knew; the creature in the dispensery was awake again.

"God, what can we do?" he managed. "Except wait."

...hated him all my life... He died too early...wanted always to kill, to watch his red blood spill...to burn his flesh and separate it from mine...

"What's wrong?" Hartmann asked with a twisted smile.

"N...nothing," Goetering stammered, and fled to his cabin.

In the darkness he sat, while the cat-thing fed his fear and the secret corners of his mind back to him, blanketing his thoughts with its endless streams of hate and agony and remorse.

He knew, somehow, that he must put an end to this. The flow of stifling thought would drive him to the edge of insanity until eventually, like LeFarge, he would...

But Goetering knew that he would never follow LeFarge's course. The *Troats* had planted the blocks to prevent his escaping like that. If it hadn't been for those inhibitions, he would have killed himself long ago, after the memory of what the *Troats* had done, and what he himself had done.

HOURS LATER, Goetering felt the pressure cease, and he knew that the creature was asleep again. He had been like a sleep-walker, divorced from thought, existing automatically. It seemed as if the endless chanting of the cat-mind in some fashion heterodyned his own thoughts, as a light beam returned along its own axis ninety degrees out of phase cancels itself, leaving only blackness.

He wondered what the others must feel from the thing in the dispensery. Certainly, they were receiving their own impressions at the same time, though they had apparently learned how to live with the

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product of their own minds.

But was the cat-thing able to handle repetitions of eight separate minds—Goetering's, Hartmann's, Marvin's, and the five crewmen? Or did it emit an impalpable stimulus which brought a different set of images and emotions to each man?

He was surprised that he could reason about it, think it through so clearly now that the influence of the thing was withdrawn.

And what did the other seven receive? What secret depths of their minds did the mindless probing find?

HE RETURNED to the bridge and found Hartmann still on duty. Marvin had retired and one of the rated men was supervising the detector watch. "What have you heard?" he asked.

Hartmann shrugged. "Another recon ship spotted the enemy. One of the fast *Troat* scouts, you know, a "Betty" class—looks like an over-grown basketball with airfoils and a bank of high-velocity reaction tubes."

Hartmann inspected him. "You feel all right?"

"You mind your duty, Mister," Goetering snapped. "I'll take care of my health."

Hartmann colored and started to say something, then compressed his lips. Finally he said, "Fleet Prog predicts contact somewhere in this sector within twenty hours."

"All right," Goetering said. "You're relieved. Get some rest; you'll need it."

THE WATCH passed slowly. Each moment, Goetering expected some new assault from the direction of the dispensary. His nerves were getting him, he told himself. Of all people, why did *he* have to wind up on this ship. It was bad enough with the creature they called *Gumbo Ya-Ya*. (Stupid name.) But the coming of the *Troat* ship... How could he face the enemy again? He looked down at his hands, and saw that they were quivering as though they had a life of their own.

When the watch was over, and Mr. Marvin appeared to relieve him, Goetering stayed on for an hour. He was afraid to return to his cabin.

"You feel all right, sir?" the Warrant officer asked.

Goetering nodded. "What do you get from that thing in the dispensary?"

Marvin shrugged. "I...well, it's hard to say."

"Well, what does it feel like?"

"I'd rather not say." The Warrant officer turned away.

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GOETERING finally returned to his cabin and tried to get some sleep. He knew that he would need all the rest he could get within the next ten hours, as the enemy drew within range. There was no word yet on which human ship was likely to encounter the scout but he prayed silently that it would not be the *Abalon*.

He had slept perhaps three hours when he awoke, his head throbbing as the blood distended the veins in his temples. He had one lucid thought before all sensation faded and that thought was that his *prayers* had not been answered.

He felt the unclean fingers within his mind, twisting the tissue into the pattern that meant...

...killed him...killed him ...in hate and desire for revenge that...

And another thought "... *thing in the box...kill it... kill it...kill it... Before it destroys you.*"

He was suddenly in the passageway, stumbling blindly, feeling his way along cold metal walls. He pushed open the door to the dispensary. He didn't look at the sleeping thing in the incubator; his hand fumbled for the plastic tubes, leading to the enclosure. He ripped them aside and heard the enriched air hissing from the bottles. Then he ripped the wires from the thermostat and stumbled back to his cabin.

FOR AN instant, he could feel the pain and the anger of the cat as it died...and the distant hurt of the thing that had entered his mind. But that distant mind, after long moments of agony, again grew strong for an instant.

And he felt remorse for an instant... The one chance against the *Troats*, who had long ago destroyed him and were coming again to finish what they had begun over a decade before.

"Listen, you have not done it"... That was a *Troat* thought.

But I did... Goetering's mind replied.

"Somewhere there are others..."

It was the only one...

"No, there are others and they will destroy us...as surely as they will destroy you..."

No...last chance...

"We will land...talk... You must listen..."

No, don't come near me...

"Don't you understand, I'm afraid. We're afraid..."

Get out of my mind, you...

Something twisted, and Goetering screamed, but not aloud.

"Filth... But you will help us. This thing can destroy us both!"

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And the mind withdrew as Goetering awoke, bathed in perspiration.

Then he realized what he had done; he had killed the creature. For a moment, he felt exultation, then fear; the cat-thing was the only barrier between the ship and the *Troat* minds approaching.

But... they thought the cat-thing was still alive, still capable of destroying them. The danger was still a real thing in their minds.

How?... Or *was* it dead?

HE FOUND Hartmann in the dispensary bundling things into an incinerator bag.

"I was just going to call you," the Ensign said. He gestured at the bag. Goetering reached out and parted the folds. Inside, the mother cat was rigid in death, her blue tongue protruding from her mouth. The fur at her throat was speckled with blood.

"I've already destroyed the litter."

"What caused that?"

"I think you know," Hartmann said.

"Mister," Goetering said fiercely, "I asked you what happened."

"LeFarge knew that the mutant needed more oxygen, more warmth. That's why he set up the incubator. When the oxygen-rich air cut off, and the temperature dropped, it didn't bother the other cats. But the mutant needed oxygen to live."

Goetering felt suddenly ill. "So..."

"So it drained the mother, trying to get enough to live," Hartmann said.

Goetering spent the next eight hours on the bridge, receiving reports on the *Troat* ship. Hartmann had returned from the dispensary and kept him silent company. Mister Marvin was nowhere to be seen; Goetering assumed that he and the engineer's mate were readying the motors of the *Abalon* for possible pursuit.

WHEN THE report came that the enemy had penetrated the picket line nearly two hundred thousand miles to their port, Goetering breathed a sigh of relief; this was within the sector of responsibility of the picketship *Vesper* rather than the *Abalon*.

His relief was short-lived; a message came from the *Vesper*. Engine trouble. The *Troat* ship was making for the second planet of Star X-Go-4523 in *Abalon's* sector. The *Abalon* would have to follow it in.

Goetering gave the orders and Hartmann signaled the engine room for stand-by power. From somewhere, Goetering found the strength to give the order. "Set up the course," he

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told Hartmann. "We'll have to go in after her."

They lost contact with the *Troat* ship shortly thereafter, but the detectors picked the enemy up again as the *Abalon* approached the mist-shrouded second planet, three hours later. The *Troat* was patiently circling the world as though waiting.

The *Abalon* followed a long parabola inward as the enemy lost velocity and disappeared into the mists of the lower atmosphere. They picked up the radiation of its engines as they entered the atmosphere. The *Troat* ship had landed by that time, but its engines still radiated their tell-tale signal. There was only one possible conclusion.

"They *want* us to find them," Goetering said. Hartmann grunted.

GOETERING brought the ship down, scarcely a quarter mile from the waiting *Troat* ship. Only a low ridge, covered with a rank tropical growth separated them from direct vision. Something was pressing him, speeding him with an urgency that he could not identify.

"Get your men in landing gear," he ordered. "Light weapons."

"Against the *Troats?*" Hartmann protested.

"No weapon is any good against the *Troats,*" Goetering caught a faint look of suspicion from Hartmann, but the man said nothing.

Goetering found his way to the airlock in a warm haze. He was only dimly aware of adjusting the helmet, with its heavy kepi, to his head. He checked the charge of his bolt gun automatically and holstered it. Then he stepped out into the muggy air and motioned for Hartmann and the five men with beam rifles to follow him.

"Listen," the *Troat* voice said in his mind, *"you small, sickening little vermin. We broke you and you come again."*

But there was a touch of fear in that thought.

What do you want?

"To see you, to touch you, to twist the thoughts from your dirty mind, to..."

They were on the ridge now, looking down into the shallow valley where the ship rested. It *did* look like a fat basketball with airfoils, a part of his mind observed.

To what?

"To find out what..."

To find out what can kill you?

The mind in the enemy ship was silent. Then it sobbed.

"I'm... we're afraid... That thing..."

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GOETERING laughed out loud, ignoring Hartmann's startled expression. The Ensign moved to his side as the other men filed past them in a ragged line. He watched as four preceded him, while he and Hartmann and one of the detector men brought up the rear.

He realized that he was weaving drunkenly. *"We'll quit ... We'll give you anything,"* the *Troat* mind was shrieking *"...only not...not..."*

...burning...his face aflame...

The mutant wasn't dead. Goetering hadn't killed it.

And then he saw the creature, flaming orange, a giant thing that moved over the low ridge behind the *Troat* ship and raised a soft paw, for all the world like a small kitten attacking a ball of twine.

Then he was yelling, ordering the men to fire at the creature. Goetering turned and saw Hartmann standing there, his hands on his hips, laughing. "Fire, for God's sake!"

HARTMANN and the other man laughed and raised their weapons. They fired over Goetering's head, laughed and fired again. He heard the sizzling sound of other weapons, turned to see the four men in the valley laughing and firing at the cat-thing.

"Kill it...kill it..." came the thought in his mind. *"Kill it...like flame...you burned him down because you always hated him..."*

Goetering didn't realize that he was yelling his answer to the probing thought from the enemy. "Liar! You made me do it; you found the secret in my mind. You twisted it to use against me, to control me, just the way you used the others' secrets."

He saw the cat-figure folding inward, enveloping the *Troat* ship. And the figure was diminishing in size; it was only a mental image, he thought. But mental images can cripple ...and kill...

He heard an enemy outcry in his brain now. *"My brother ...I didn't want to serve with him...help...hated him from the time we were boys, and he..."*

The deadly parallell continued...not exactly the same secret as Goetering's but close enough.

Hartmann and the others were still laughing and firing, as thoughts continued to shriek in Goetering's mind; then the *Troat* thoughts were drowned out by the recurring images from his own past..

...killed him as I'd burn down an animal...father...hate love...agony...blending in chaos as...

Something in the *Troat* ship

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screamed and died, as LeFarge had died.

Then they carried Goetering back to the *Abalon,* only half-alive, to the engine room, where Marvin—pale and naked—squatted in the dirt, holding a thing to his throat...

For it would never do for the *Troat*-Human war to end, until...

Until each ship had its defense, its master, its *Gumbo Ya-Ya*...

And now there was no hope of killing the thing in the *Abalon.*

THERE WAS Marvin, dirty and naked, moving toward Goetering in the shadows of the engine room, as Hartmann and the others held him and pulled his shirt from his body.

Gumbo Ya-Ya. Everybody talks together. Talks of the things hidden in them, the black tales that no one wants to tell, the flaws in the psyche, whereby another may take control....

Eight men on the *Abalon*—eight tales of violence, of blackness, of horror...

Goetering felt the sharp teeth of the thing fasten on him, pierce his throat, and through a drugged haze he heard fragments of the eight tales... *the time when blood was on my knife... with wide hips and full mouth and I didn't mean...* Dimly he pieced out the stories of violence, of insanity, of hidden fear, of brain-warping from his mind and the minds of the seven others... fusing, everyone talking together...

Then, came the outlines of a ninth tale... a dream of many creatures holding the stupid race of men for their service and sustenance... a dream that did not distinguish between man and *Troat*...

The ninth tale was not a tale of fear, but of conquest.

★

Another unusual story by Thomas N. Scortia

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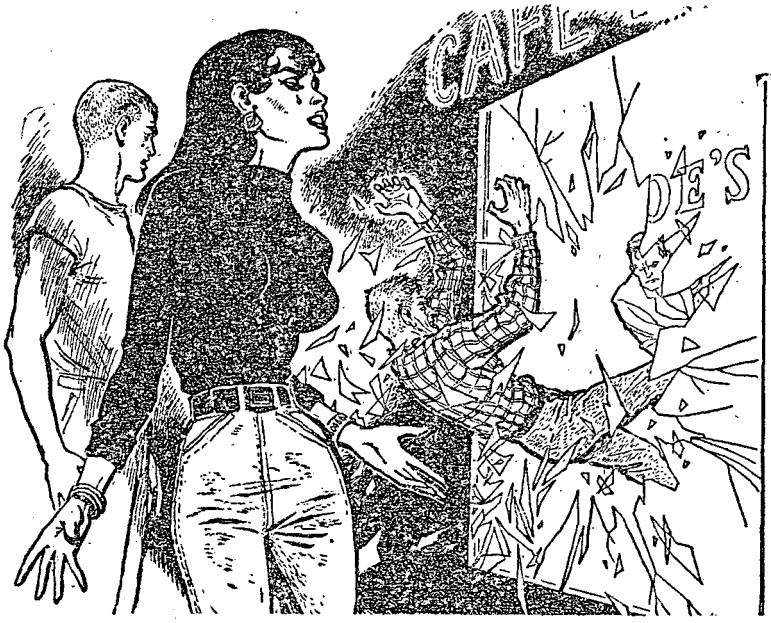

Markarie and Leonote both wept copiously . . .

A SEASON FOR REMORSE

by Robert Silverberg

These tourists were paying me big money to take them around; but every trip we took seemed to lead to some kind of tragedy . . .

I WAS HOME, alone, unemployed and bored, when they came. I was suffering from spiritual malaise and disenchantment, as the Contemporary Civilization textbooks so splendidly put it. There's nothing so comforting as a cliche at the right time.

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I was listening to the opening Series game between the Phillies and the Yanks—with the Yanks, as usual, overwhelming favorites. I was rooting for the Phils, myself; the Yanks hardly ever lose a Series, and the poor Phillies have been trying since 1915 without ever coming out on top in an October classic.

The game was in the thir and the Phillies had edged o in front, 2-0, which made me feel a little better about things. As the Yanks came up for their licks in the inning, I heard someone rapping at the hall door—a neat, diffident sort of rapping. *One-two-three, one-two.* Precise, clean, rhythmical.

I snapped off the radio, straightened my hair, and went to the door. Standing patiently outside was a small man—five-two, maybe, not much more—and an even smaller woman.

"May we come in?" the man asked, smiling mildly.

"Sure. Be it ever so humble, this is where I live."

"We're glad to find you at home, Mr. Adkins," the woman said. Her voice was faint but perfectly audible, and sounded like a gentle, far-off tinkling of crystal bells.

THEY INTRODUCED themselves. The man was named Markarie, the woman, Leonote. They were—as I was finding out from the subtle accents of their well-modulated voices—from abroad. Tourists.

They looked fairly young; at least, their faces were serene and unlined, and their eyes were calm. Markarie's eyes were a deep, monochromatic blue; Leonote's were a strange sort of off-purple. They were dressed in conventional American outfits, or a tourist's idea thereof—he had on a neat charcoal gray suit with wisps of orange floating through it, and she was wearing a neat, well-tailored black dress with a simple blouse.

Neat. That was the way to sum them up. Perfectly groomed, perfectly tailored, the dimensions of each eyebrow obviously calibrated to the last millimeter. I felt hopelessly sloppy and uncouth next to them; it pained me, and I used to glory in Bohemianism.

I leaned back against the unpainted bookcase, hoping I was hiding the tattered paperbacks from view, and smiled. "Just what is it you want?"

Markarie matched my smile—only his was a studied thing that brought his upper lip up in a slow curve and jutted the lower one forward to show just the proper amount of geniality. "We are looking for a guide, Mr. Adkins. We have only a

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short time to spend here, and there are certain things we *must* see. And—"

He crossed his arms in a gesture of hopelessness, and Leonote finished the sentence. "My husband means that we find your city so complex that we need someone to help us."

HER FACE took on a faint expression of sadness, as if she and Markarie had been buffeted around on the subways all day, and didn't think they could hold out much longer. That made sense; doll-like people like these just didn't belong in a place like New York.

"You need a guide," I said. "But why me?"

"Your name was given to us," Markarie replied smoothly. "We are in a position to pay well, and the services we require are simple ones."

"It is a mere matter of taking us to the places we wish to see," said Leonote. "We're sure you can help us."

I started to frown, but then Markarie exposed a thick roll of bills, and delicately peeled off three hundred-dollar notes. I stared down at the three engravings of Benjamin Franklin's bland, complacent face for a long moment. Three hundred was more money than I'd seen at any one time all year.

"This is the retainer, Mr. Adkins. There will be more later." Markarie stared languidly at his wife. "Will it be satisfactory?" he asked her.

"Yes," she said, lightly but firmly.

I felt my fingers starting to tremble. "Just what is it you want me to do, again?"

"We will return at twelve noon, next Monday. Please be prepared to leave with us immediately for our first stop."

"Sure," I said. "Sure. I'll be ready."

THE WEEK flew by rapidly, and the three hundred vanished just as fast. I paid my back rent, much to the management's astonishment; that shot a hundred. Then I paid the fifty that I owed the employment agency, for the job they'd gotten me. I had left the job after a week, but the agency didn't care about my quirks of temperament; they wanted their fifty, and I gave it to them.

Then I bought books, even a few hardcovers, and records —*Tristan*, and the set of Brandenburg Concertos I had coveted so long. With what was left, I threw a shindig for some of my friends. It was a very, very esthetic gathering, with much talk of Zeitgeist, and unified sensibility, and Eliot's "objective c o r r e l a t i v e" and such

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things. It always amuses me how my friends—and they *are* my friends—will piously abjure all the "bourgeois" cliches, and then proceed to adopt a new set. These are more elevated, to be sure, but they're cliches all the same.

Beneath all this esthetic chit-chat, though, ran a more serious topic of discussion: where did I get this sudden windfall? I thought it best to explain, in case anyone got the wrong ideas.

So I explained. "I've been hired by two tourists to pilot them around New York. They're scared of subways."

"I don't blame them," someone said.

"Where are they from? Mars?" asked someone else.

"No, they're not Martians," I said. "They're Orientals, I guess, though they don't look it. It's the way they act."

THE EXPLANATION suited my friends, but it didn't suit me. The pair were Earthmen, all right; but from where on Earth? Their fragility and neatness of manner and their strange poise suggested the Orient, but there was nothing Asiatic about their physical appearance. It didn't figure. I gave up worrying about it, after a few days. The Series was more exciting.

It became a tight, tense battle right down to the end. The Yanks took the sixth game that Sunday, to tie things up. I didn't know which made me unhappier—the fact that the Phils were now compelled to beat the Yanks on the New Yorkers' home grounds to win the big prize, or the equally distasteful fact that I had successfully consumed all three hundred of Markarie's dollars.

THEY CAME back—at noon, sharp, on Monday. They were dressed differently, but just as impeccably as before, and they wore the same neat, painted-on smiles.

"Hello," I said. "Good to see you again."

"We are happy to be back," Markarie said gently. "Are you ready to leave?"

"Leave? Oh—sure." I had hoped they'd postpone today's sight-seeing for three or four hours, but when Markarie produced another gaggle of bills I swallowed my annoyance. With that kind of money in my pocket I could hire some sports announcer to recreate the game for me, play-by-play.

But that wasn't going to be necessary, I found out a moment later. Markarie slid his hand into his pocket again and drew out three large pasteboards that seemed much too

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big for his slim, tapering fingers. He handed them to me.

They were tickets for today's World Series game—in a box just off first base.

"Where'd you get these?"

"We have had them a while," said Markarie. "We are very anxious to see today's game."

"Are you *baseball fans?*" I should have thought that this was the last possible facet of our culture which might interest them.

Leonote nodded. "We take a deep interest in the sport," she said. "It will be an exciting game today."

"You're not kidding!" I looked at my watch. Ten after twelve. Game time was at one.

WE TOOK the Eighth Avenue Subway up there. The car got pretty crowded as we approached the Bronx, and I saw Markarie and Leonote sniffling a bit, as if they weren't enjoying the presence of so many hulking New Yorkers in one little train. I didn't blame them.

Yankee Stadium was mobbed, of course. We joined a line and filtered in. I watched my two charges with a great deal of curiosity as we headed for our seats. Both of them kept darting their bright, active eyes around, studying the dead expressions of the ticket-takers, the keen interest on the faces of small boys seeing their first Series game, the tight-lipped anxiety of older but no less foolish rooters.

A familiar tension gripped the ballpark. The deciding game of a World Series has an apocalyptic air that smacks of Greek tragedy, or of the Roman gladiatorial contests. An aura of fate, of doom for the loser and exaltation for the victor, hung over the huge stadium. I found myself cold-fingered with apprehension. I *wanted* the Phils to win; it was almost illegal to let the Yankees cop yet another series.

But the Yanks struck first, coming up with three runs in the opening frame. Markarie and Leonote remained perfectly silent as the Yanks jogged gaily around the basepaths and poured over the plate.

The dispirited Phils pecked back for a single marker in the fifth, but the Yanks pounded three more over a stanza later. And it went into the ninth that way, 6-1.

Suddenly the Phils came alive, and before we could believe it, four runs had scored, and the tieing run was at the plate.

"This is wonderful," I heard Markarie say. The Yanks got the big second out, but not before another Phil reached first

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base. Men on first and second—the tieing and leading runs—with two out. What drama! What intensity!

I held my breath. The ballpark fell silent. The next batter rifled a line shot past third, and the runner from second dashed around the bases. He steamed into third, and the coach boldly signalled for him to keep going, to carry the tieing run over! Only a step or two behind him came the fleet-footed runner who'd been on first.

The left fielder was slow about retrieving, but finally got the ball; he made a fine throw, but everyone in the ballpark could see it would be too late.

And then the front runner stumbled and fell. The gleeful Yank catcher tagged him for the final out of the inning, of the game and of the Series.

I pounded my fist against the railing of the box. To be so close to a miracle victory.... why, I felt like crying.

Then I looked at Markarie and Leonote. They *were* crying. Great gleaming teardrops were running down their smooth, pink cheeks.

AS PREVIOUSLY arranged, I convoyed them to their headquarters, a fashionable apartment house in the East Fifties. They didn't want to take a subway; they preferred the solitude of a taxi, so I hailed one after a good deal of trouble.

I gave the address.

"Those Yankees had a close shave today," the driver remarked, as we started downtown. "Rough break for the Phils."

"It sure was," I said. I was still unhappy, but not really distressed any longer. But my two employers were both still sobbing quietly.

Markarie signalled to me not to get into any more conversations with the driver, and the rest of the trip was made in complete silence. I delivered them to the door of their apartment, and started to leave.

Leonote wiped away a tear—her eyes were red and blotchy from weeping—and said, "Thank you so much."

"Sorry the game turned out so badly for you," I replied, sympathetically.

"Don't be too disturbed," said Markarie. "The day was not a total loss for us." He smiled through his tears. "We will expect you at 11:15 tomorrow evening."

I made a mental note of it, nodded, and left.

AT 11:15 the next night, I rang the doorbell and they came popping out, ready to go.

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"Come," Markarie said. "We have very little time." He handed me another hundred note—that made six hundred for the job so far—and bustled off down the hall to the elevator, with Leonote tagging behind.

I felt somewhat guilty about taking so much pay for so little work; but if they *wanted* to be exploited, why should I argue?

When we entered the elevator, I got a good look at them. They were dressed bizarrely, to say the least. Markarie was wearing dirty khakis and an old T-shirt; Leonote, faded blue jeans and a black turtleneck sweater. It was a startling change from their previous sartorial impeccability, but if they wanted to go native I didn't mind.

Markarie handed me a card bearing an address scribbled in a thin, spidery hand. "This is where we go tonight."

I studied the address. It was that of a small but fairly well-known Greenwich Village cafe, a hangout for indigent poets and painters and such. I had been there once or twice. "We'll take the I.R.T.," I told them.

WE GOT THERE about twenty of twelve, and took a table in the back. The waiter hovered over us solicitously, but neither Markarie nor Leonote cared to have anything.

"Beer," I said.

I saw that my charges were staring pointedly at one of the tables behind me, and swivelled to see what had caught their attention.

"Do you know the man in the plaid shirt?" Markarie asked.

I nodded. "He's Harry Broderick—*poete maudit*. He's written some awfully good stuff, but he's always been too drunk to get anywhere. He keeps ripping up his best poems in drunken frenzies."

"And the man with him?"

Inclining my neck a little for a better view, I said, "Colin Sullivan. Runs one of the little magazines—he's published some of Broderick's poetry. Notably tightfisted."

"Fine," Markarie said. "Let's listen."

IT WASN'T hard because the conversation was growing progressively noisier. Apparently, both were in their cups.

"I've got to have those poems, Harry!" I heard Sullivan say.

"You'll pay for them if you want them," replied Broderick.

"You know I can't pay!" Sullivan said. "*The Critic* is strictly a prestige market."

"I can't eat prestige."

"You mean you can't ***drink***

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it," snapped Sullivan. He reached for a thick sheaf of poems that Broderick grasped in one hand. "Come on, now. It's not fair to show an old friend marvelous stuff like this and then refuse to let him publish it."

Markarie bent low over the table. "Is his poetry really good?"

"Brilliant," I said. "I hope he lets these new ones get printed somewhere."

Evidently he wouldn't, though. Sullivan reached for them, but the poet pulled them out of reach. "I'm tired of prestige. I need money."

Sullivan laughed. "Selling out, eh? Why, better men than you have *pleaded* with me to take their work."

At that Broderick kicked back his chair and stood up. "I don't plead," he said. To emphasize his point, he calmly ripped the manuscript into small chunks and scattered the pieces in the air. Then he kicked the table aside and leaped for Sullivan.

"Let's get out of here," I whispered. "This may be dangerous."

Markarie agreed. "Let's watch from outside."

THE THREE of us edged toward the door, while the two men inside battled furiously up and down the tiny cafe. I saw the waiter trying unsuccessfully to separate them.

We stood outside and peered in; the floor was snowflaked with fragments of Broderick's manuscript.

Sullivan was getting the upper hand. He crouched, then reared up, striking the poet amidships. Broderick staggered back, and his enraged opponent hit him in the face.

Broderick lost his balance, clawed the air in his struggle to stay upright, and went crashing into the cheap, flimsy glass front window of the cafe. He burst through, sending a shower of glass shards into the street. I pulled Markarie and Leonote away just in time.

I looked down at them, and said, "We'd better start moving. There'll be all sorts of trouble about this."

A long, thin sliver of glass had pierced Broderick's throat deeply as he fell. Sullivan was staring down at the corpse, unbelieving, in white-faced horror.

"Harry!" he finally managed to say. "The next Yeats, perhaps—and I've cut him off at the outset of his career."

Quivering, he sank to his knees and broke into hysterical tears. I hustled Leonote and Markarie away before the police arrived. They were crying, again; they were sobbing bit-

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terly, as if they'd lost a dear friend.

BY THE TIME we reached their apartment house, they had calmed down again—but now *I* was thoroughly shaken up. Broderick's death left me brooding over the sad waste of talent—and another thing bothered me.

We'd been on hand to witness two tragedies, and I had a feeling that Markarie and Leonote had known just where to go.

It worried me. And it worried me even more when Markarie told me that the final excursion we would make together would be downtown to the UN, to hear the Security Council's deliberations.

We took a taxi the next day, and arrived at the 43rd St. "world capitol" about two in the afternoon, the time to get tickets for the second session of the day. Tickets aren't made available to the public until a half hour before starting time.

I got on line, though, and triumphed. I also found out why Markarie and Leonote needed someone like me—they never would have been aggressive enough themselves to do the things required to get tickets.

SURPRISINGLY, the session had already convened by the time we took our seats in the gallery. Even the guides seemed surprised to see the show under way before the audience was seated. Something big must be going on, I thought.

Something big was. Almost before we had settled comfortably in our seats, I saw the Chairman, a small, swarthy man, rise and announce in sepulchral tones, "The resolution is hereby passed."

Dead silence followed—almost a shocked silence.

Then the delegate from Brazil rose, looking about ready to explode. He blinked his eyes, as if what he had to say was too painful to deliver.

"In view of this resolution, and all it implies," he said, speaking in perfect English with careful, measured tones, "In view of this resolution, I say, my country has no other choice but to act on its earlier declaration of intent."

He paused, and I saw the conference-table crackle with unvoiced tension. I began to remember dimly something I'd read in the paper last week, about peaceful Brazil's threat to—

He spoke again. "Effective immediately," he said quietly, "the Brazilian delegation withdraws from the United Nations:"

"But that'll split the whole

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organization!" protested a delegate from England, and then the Council President rapped down with his gavel. It did no good. The place was in an uproar, and only the man from Brazil was calm; he was coolly packing his portfolio.

WE DROVE back to their place in a cab. The driver had nothing to say, but the newsboys on the streetcorners were hawking it already.

Brazil quits UN over territory squabble! Collapse of world organization seen!

President calls Cabinet meeting! Crisis! Extra!

My two friends were dabbing delicately at their moist eyes.

I was upset too—but not over the UN, which had been toppling since '61 anyway. I was upset about Markarie and Leonote. Who—what?—were they, and where were they from?

When we reached the door of their apartment, Markarie drew out four more bills, making it an even thousand for the job, and gave them to me. He was smiling happily—a strange, abrupt reverse in emotions.

"It has been a very successful tour," he said. "We have enjoyed your company, Mr. Adkins."

"I'll bet you have," I said bluntly.

Markarie blinked, but Leonote moved past him, unlocked the door, and gracefully nodded what was obviously my goodbye. I nodded back; then, as Markarie started to enter, I jammed a foot in the door, pushed it open, and walked in.

"Sorry to be so rough," I said apologetically. "But I want to know—"

I STOPPED, openmouthed. The apartment was filled with the most peculiar furniture conceivable. Curious involuted chairs, helical tables, a foot-thick beige rug, sparkling blue-and-pink drapes that flickered in and out of existence from the second to second—furnishings out of a nightmare. And right in the middle of the room was a shimmering pile of machinery that I won't even try to describe.

Markarie and Leonote were very pale.

"I wish you hadn't done that, Mr. Adkins. It makes us very sad."

"I want to know who you are." I strode over to the big machine. "And if you don't tell me, I'll start breaking things—beginning with this." I lifted a fist and held it over some intricate-looking coilwork.

They gasped. "Typical primitive reaction," I heard Leonote murmur. They glanced at each

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other, and Markarie shook his head.

"Don't smash it," he said. "We'll explain—and then we'll leave."

"For where?"

"For what you think of as the future."

I LET OUT a deep breath. It was what I had been suspecting for a long while.

"What are you doing here?" I said weakly. "Why'd you come to this particular time? To me?" I staggered back and sank down in a violet-and-orange armchair that looked like a pair of clutching hands.

"I'll be brief," said Markarie. "In our time—we are considerably ahead of you—we have these." He produced a good-sized box and opened it to show me a fearsome array of shining hypodermic syringes, and bottles of various-colored sparkling liquids.

"Emotional control," Leonote explained. I stared dazedly at her. "We have no problems, no crises, no glandular imbalances. Ours is a neat, orderly, well-regulated world."

I saw the picture. "And you came back here—to see what chaos is like!"

Markarie nodded. "It is, shall we say, a catharsis? A type of esthetic experience? Being able to visit your world, to experience emotional disturbance at regular intervals, is of great importance to us."

Leonote smiled gently. "And now, we must return. We have fulfilled our needs, and wish to go back. Please leave us, and say nothing of this—since no one will believe you anyway."

THEN A NEW idea struck me, and a burst of rage ran through me. "Hold it!" I said tightly. "Time travel gives you the power to change things! You could *eliminate* our chaos," I continued angrily. "Why don't you?"

Markarie's translucent features curved in a dreamy smile. "To alter your world would be to alter ours—and we love our world too much to do that. The happenings of the past few days have all played their parts in shaping the world to come. Besides, we must have something to weep over, and for that we must come to you. No, we do not care to alter your world."

They turned away and began loading items into the machine, and each thing vanished as it was put in.

Very politely Leonote led me to the door. "You must go now." She looked at me; and when I saw the expression in her eyes, I understood.

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MARS TRIAL

NOVELET

by Theodore L. Thomas

illustrated by EMSH

The Auerbach Case was crucial for the Mars colony, for the complications of four sectors brought on a controversy as to whether the English, Russians, Germans, or Americans would try the murderer. And that was the start of ruinous conflict . . .

THE SHIP glittered like a diamond against the fast-darkening sky. The space field lay in deep shadow; but up there where the ship was, the last rays of the sun shone strong. Again it glittered as it turned end-for-end and dropped lower over the field. A slim stream of fire leaped from the stern and visibly slowed its fall. High as the ship was, the roar of its braking jet could be plainly heard by the watching people. The arrival of the monthly ship was an event at the Mars colony, and no one missed it unless he had to.

The ship dropped lower, and the tearing roar of the Rockets grew louder. It was clear, now, that the ship would not come down in the center of the huge space field but instead would land in the northeast quadrant. The waiting tenders began to drift slowly in that direction.

When the ship was a few feet from the ground, the crashing pandemonium shook the domes a mile away. Men and women wrinkled their eyes from the sound and children covered their ears. In a mo-

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"They'll listen to you," Landers whispered. "You've got to tell them all to go home."

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ment it was over; the ship stood tall on the ground, wavering on its tail fins. The floodlight from the American hangar bathed the wobbling ship in brilliant light, and those closest to it could clearly read its name, *Moscow*.

THE TENDERS rolled up fast on their fat wheels to try and put a line on the ship before it fell. But before the closest one could get within a hundred yards, it happened; slowly and majestically, with great dignity and deliberation, the *Moscow* toppled over.

The tenders swarmed over it and slipped wheels under its huge bulk. Spectators admired the smooth efficiency of the tenders as they urged the great ship toward the airlock of the American hangar. Each man in his tender knew exactly what had to be done to get the ship into a breathable atmosphere, without wasting a moment. They had had practice, too; three months earlier, the ship *London* had fallen—and a year before that, it had been the *Washington*. And now, with the *Moscow*, the efficiency of the men who manned the tenders was plain to see, even to the casual eye.

The lock closed behind the *Moscow*, and air surged in with almost explosive force. Men in coveralls swarmed to the several ports of the ship and opened them from the outside. Skilled technicians went in through the ports and swiftly sought out the parts that might have been damaged by the fall. Two doctors went in with them to see if any of the crew had been hurt. People from nearby domes watched anxiously through the polyethylene walls, hopeful that no damage had been done. And no one noticed a short, stocky man in coveralls; no one saw him slip in through the port, once the first rush was over.

One of the doctors made his way to the bridge. Captain Mihalovna had unstrapped himself and was standing with one hand pressed against the wall and the other pressed against his head.

"You all right, Captain?" asked the doctor.

The captain looked up. "Yes, I think so. How are the rest of them? I've not been able to make contact over the intercom."

"We're checking now. Care to go with me while I make a trip through the ship?"

Mihalovna nodded and fell in behind the doctor, muttering to himself.

"What did you say, Captain?"

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MIHALOVNA shook his head. "I said I wish these Earthside engineers would let me redesign a ship. *I* know how to keep them from falling, but they always know better. Bunch of bright boys, they are."

"I know what you mean," said the doctor. "We have found better ways to process the purple lichen for antibiotic extraction, but the Earthside doctors won't agree that it's any good. They want to do it their way. So we just keep shipping them the whole plant."

"Some day," said the captain. "Some day."

The two men moved slowly down the passageway, looking in at various doors to check the damage to people and equipment. It was hard work to move around in the cramped interior.

They came to the large instrument room amidships. Three members of the *Moscow's* crew were swiftly closing air valves behind the instrument panel. Several other technicians—one of them a short, stocky man in coveralls, helped them. Mihalovna and the doctor exchanged a few words with the men, then moved on.

They had not gone more than ten feet past the entrance to the instrument room when a high-pitched, shrill scream rang through the ship. They froze in place, gooseflesh racing up their spines as the scream bubbled off into silence, then turned and jumped back to the instrument room.

The short, stocky man in coveralls knelt in a corner over one of the technicians. Again and again, he drove a knife into the body of the fallen man; sobs choked his breath and muttered German phrases burst from his lips.

FOR A LONG instant the men watched the scene, stunned; then as one they cried out and moved in on the stocky man. He stumbled to his feet and swung to face them, his back in a corner. His feet straddled the thing on the floor and his body went half forward toward his attackers. He held the knife loosely and expertly in his right hand; his eyes were bloodshot.

Just before they closed in, the stocky man dropped the knife, covered his face with both hands, and fell to his knees. Captain Mihalovna stepped over and kicked the knife across the room. He signaled his men. Two of them took the stocky man and led him out the door, squeezing past groups of men jammed into the corridors, and out onto the floor of the hangar.

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The hangar chief met the group. "What happened?"

"Killed a man," said one of the crew. "Knifed him to death. Can you take care of him?"

The hangar chief nodded and looked at the killer. "What's your name, man?"

There was no answer. The stocky man stopped sobbing but kept his hands in front of his face.

The chief reached up and pulled the hands down. "What's your name, I said."

The culprit raised a blood-stained face and said softly, "Auerbach. Hans Auerbach."

"You from the German sector?"

Auerbach nodded.

The chief turned to the circle of men. "Jones, you and Carle and Austin take Auerbach to the Number two tool room and lock him up. Anderson, call Jim Davis and tell him what's happened. Ask him what he wants us to do with Auerbach here. Go." He waved them all off.

CAPTAIN MIHALOVNA arrived, and the hangar chief asked who had been killed.

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know; it wasn't one of my men. Let's go find out."

They went back into the ship and re-entered the instrument room. The body on the floor had been covered with a piece of canvas. Several groups of men had squeezed into the room and were talking quietly.

"Who was he?" asked the captain.

One of the men stepped forward. "His name was Hinton, Fred Hinton."

"What was he doing here?"

"He was on duty in the English sector when the ship came in. He came over to help; that's all I know."

The hangar chief asked, "Does he have any kin?"

"Yes; he has a sister. Elizabeth. But he's not married."

"Well, thank heaven for that." The chief turned to Mihalovna. "Any objection to sending the body over to the English sector?"

"No," said the captain. "I'll have some of my men help. We had better call Perce Whitcomb over there and tell him what happened. He will probably want to make some special arrangements."

THE MAN who had identified the body moved closer. "If I may make a suggestion, Sirs, send the murderer over to us, too. We'll know what to do with him."

Another man stepped forward. "That's right, Sir. We'll take him along. Manager Whit-

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comb will want him, anyway; the man killed one of—"

"Wait." The captain raised his hand. "Manager Davis has Auerbach now." At the mention of the killer's name, the listeners looked at one another. "The Managers will get together and decide what should be done with him. It's out of our hands now, so let's move Hinton's body out of here and over to the English sector." He detailed several of his men to help the Englishmen wrap and carry Hinton home.

After they left, the hangar chief said, "Well, captain, I guess we had better get back to work. The *Moscow* is in pretty good shape and you should be able to take it over to your sector soon. I'm sorry this had to happen, but I suppose sooner or later we had to have a murder here at the colony."

"Yes, I suppose so. Oh, may I use your phone? I ought to report this to Manager Zherkov. And do you think anyone has reported this to Muller?"

"I don't know; I'll call him. That will take care of all four sector managers."

"Good. Thank you." Mihalovna left the ship to place his call.

GRADUALLY, things got back to normal. The hangar crew settled down to the job of putting the *Moscow* into condition to be hauled back to its mother hangar. But every once in a while, a man working on the outside of the ship would stop his work and stare out across the great expanse of landing field. On the other side of the huge field they could see the low, mile-long length of one of the Hydroponics Buildings. To the southwest, a thin finger of smoke pointed down to the Synthetic Plant in the German sector. Less than a mile behind him to the Northeast stood the American Oxygen Station. They could see the Russian Water Station and the British Textile Plant. And off in the greying distance they could see the rising hills rippling like ocean waves with smaller jagged rock formations—like waves beating a continuing assault on the smooth island of ground on which the entire colony lay.

And so the men looked and worked and looked again. There was a feeling of wrongness, vague, uncertain. It was a good colony, a hard-working colony, the first of its kind in the history of mankind. Two thousand men and women from four nations had all put a little bit of their hearts into it. But now, all seemed tainted—tainted by an act forbidden since man first began to reason. Murder had come to the Mars colony.

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JAMES DAVIS sat at his desk holding his head in his hands. The day had been the usual long, hard one; and just as he had been about to leave for dinner, Anderson had called to tell him about the killing.

He was a man of medium height with thinning jet-black hair. His face and body were round, giving an impression of softness. His eyes were bright blue and looked out at the world with disconcerting levelness. He looked a lot younger than his fifty-two years.

Davis sat back in his chair. Nearby his secretary glanced at him sympathetically. Davis caught her glance and smiled wanly. "What a mess. Will you get Gray Landers over here as soon as possible, please?"

She nodded, picked up the phone and twirled the crank. While she called, Davis walked over to a window in the office wall and looked through it, down the length of the hangar. Over near the great lock, he could see the *Moscow*, ready to start the long haul across the space field to the Russian hangar.

He went back to his desk and shuffled papers around.

LANDERS walked in with his outsuit still on. He sat down in a chair alongside Davis. "Well, Jim, I hear we have a problem."

"You've already heard about it? News travels fast."

Landers nodded. "It's all over the colony now; but what are the details? All I know is that there has been a deliberate murder. The way I heard it, one of our boys killed a member of the *Moscow* crew."

Davis shook his head. "No. A man named Auerbach from the German sector followed the field crew aboard the *Moscow* and killed one of them."

"Why?"

Again Davis shook his head. "I don't know yet. I'm going to talk to him in a few minutes, and I want you to be there."

"Why?" asked Landers again.

"Because you are next in line here. This may turn out to be a very nasty problem. We've never had a murder, or any other bad crime in the colony before; we've got to face up to it both for now and for the future. This thing will set a precedent." He stopped, dropped his head for a moment, and then looked up and continued, "Besides, you're a lawyer."

Landers got up and began to pace back and forth in the tiny office. Davis watched him

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closely. The secretary tactfully left.

LANDERS was a tall lean man, flat of chest but broad of shoulder. He looked older than his thirty-eight years; his gray eyes sat deep in a network of wrinkles. He walked on the balls of his feet, seeming always to be about to spring to one side or another.

"Jim," he said. "I was a lawyer once, a patent lawyer. But even before I came here I was a research director; I haven't had anything to do with law for six years. I'm here on Mars as a technical man; we don't need and don't want lawyers here now. We have order here; we have our rules, and everyone obeys them. We lead a hard life, dangerous, and we all work together. That's the only way we can live under these conditions. There's no room for lawyers; they don't contribute enough to our kind of society." He stopped in front of Davis's desk and stood there, hands on hips.

Davis leaned forward. "What you say is right, Gray, but let me remind you that we've got a murder here; rules have been broken."

Landers dropped his hands and sat down again. "Yes," he said. "We come to that; we've got a murder. But let's leave it to our Council. Let the Council sit as a criminal tribunal to try this—what's his name?"

"Auerbach."

"Yes, Auerbach. Let our Council try Auerbach. The Council makes all the other major decisions in our sector. The Congress gave it plenary powers, so it can certainly try a murder. Or we can send Auerbach back to Earth, and let them try him there; that'll wipe the whole thing right out of the colony."

Davis nodded. "I've been thinking of doing just that." He got up and said, "Let's talk to Auerbach and find out what this is all about."

II

THE TWO men walked out of the little inside dome that made up Davis's office and into the hangar dome. Davis located the hangar chief and the doctor who had seen the killing. The doctor described everything he had seen; Davis and Landers listened closely. Then they all went to the tool room where Auerbach was confined.

Auerbach turned to face them when they entered; his face was drawn, and there were dark circles under his eyes.

Davis said, "I'm the sector manager here. Why'd you do it?"

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Auerbach drew himself up. "He tried to break up my home. I thought he was my friend, this Hinton. He visited me; he ate with me; he played chess with me. We helped each other with our work; he was a good hydroponics man, too. But then I find that he and my wife are friendly, too friendly.

"I talked to him about it but he only laughed. He said we were on Mars now and a woman was free to choose the man she wanted any time she wanted. I begged him and I begged her, but they told me I was acting like I was still on Earth. I warned them; I told them I could break the old customs, too."

He wrung his hands and the tears started to his eyes. "For a week I thought what I should do. I didn't know; life is hard on Mars. A man has to do what he thinks is right. It was not right for Hinton to take my wife away from me. It wasn't right. It wasn't right. It wasn't—" Auerbach paused, and sobs twisted his body; he covered his face with his hands and cried.

The other men in the room looked at each other, then hastily looked away. Davis talked softly with the doctor, then turned to the hangar chief. "We can't keep him here. This man needs medical care. Detail three men to take him over to the Hospital dome. Tell Frank Hagen over there to take Auerbach in charge; give him any men he needs to keep Auerbach under close watch."

Davis and Landers watched as Auerbach went out under the watchful eye of three large men carrying weighty spanner wrenches. Then they went back to Davis's office.

"I haven't had dinner yet," said Davis. "Come on over to my dome for a bite so we can talk this out before it goes any further."

"Good idea," said Landers. "The bachelors' quarters hold no charm tonight."

DAVIS PICKED up a few papers and the two men left the office and headed for a small lock at the northeast corner of the hangar. Davis slipped into an outsuit. They both took helmets from a rack alongside the lock, dropped them over their heads, and twisted them down. After a brief, almost automatic check of the oxygen in the helmet flasks they passed through the lock and out into the cold Martian evening.

The dome lights throughout the colony were just coming on, giving the domes an eerie, translucent look, in startling contrast to the sharp biting

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brightness of the stars that were beginning to shine overhead. The soft warm shoes of the two men pounded gently on the hard red clay surface. They walked in silence, gazing out over the colony that seemed to be coming alive in the crisp Martian evening. They looked down the length of the huge Hydroponics building, lying equally in the Russian and American sectors, and saw the brilliant lights inside blink on and glisten through the polyethylene walls. To the south, in the Russian sector, lay the Water Station, source of all water in the colony. Behind them, to the west in the English sector, lay the Textile Plant. Ahead and slightly north, in the American sector, were the lights that marked the mines from which came all the colony's metals and fissionables. They walked in silence, looking out over the colony, and it was good.

THEY CAME to Davis's dome and entered the lock. The air pressure had no sooner built up than Nina Davis was in the lock to welcome them. "Well, Gray, so nice to see you. You'll stay for dinner of course." Her talk was directed at Landers but her eyes were on her husband.

"Evening, Nina. Yes, thank you." Landers hung up his helmet.

"Heard the news?" asked Davis.

"Yes, dear. And I'm sorry." She went up to him and kissed him on the cheek. "But don't you worry. The Lord has a reason for everything and He will help you with whatever you have to do. Now come inside where it's warm."

The went into the living room of the dome. Davis gave Landers a cigaret and then set about stuffing a monstrous black pipe with tobacco. The two men dropped into comfortable chairs and smoked, staring reflectively at the ceiling.

Nina listened to the silence for a moment and then began to chatter. "Jim, you'd never guess the news I heard today. We were over at Mrs. Muller's to work out the plans for the new nursery dome. And Sonya Zherkov told us she is going to have a baby. Imagine that. She isn't forty yet but Manager Zherkov must be several years older than you, Jim. Isn't that remarkable? She's so happy. She says the air on Mars must be a lot better than the air on Earth. Even though we have to make our own. I declare—this city of ours is just growing by leaps and bounds. And Gray, that reminds me. When are you going to find

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yourself a nice girl and get married and raise a family. You're long overdue you know."

Landers shifted uncomfortably in his chair and said, "Come now, Nina; all in good time. Besides, you're my sweetheart. I can't marry anyone else when you are around to tempt me all the time. I'm just biding my time until I can catch Jim here unawares and alone somewhere, and then I'll—" He stopped and his smile faded and his eyes dropped to the floor. Talk of murder was different now.

NINA PICKED it up as though nothing had been said. "Now you listen to me, Gray Landers; you're not getting any younger. When Jim was your age, he had been married fifteen years. There are a dozen fine girls in the colony who'd make you a good wife. I know that the Earthside statesmen don't approve of marriages here yet, but they're wrong. You just make up your mind and do it soon, anyway. A young man should be married. Why, in my—."

The phone rang. Davis looked sharply at Landers and got up to answer it. Nina kept talking but Landers did not listen. He tried to hear what Davis was saying but he could only catch occasional scraps of phrases.

Davis hung up and went back to his chair. "It was Fred Muller. Wants to make sure that Auerbach is all right." He turned to his wife. "Could you just give us something simple and quick. We'll not have time for a full meal, I think."

"It's all ready," Nina said. She placed a plate on a table—a plate heaped with slices of good fresh black bread and slabs of tangy protein slice and yak meat. A dish of creamy oleo, a plate of pungent cheese, and a pot of steaming black coffee completed the table setting.

The two men pulled up chairs and began to make sandwiches. The phone rang. Davis got up, talked for several minutes, and came back to his partially-made sandwich. "Perce Whitcomb from the English sector," he said. "Wanted to make certain we've got Auerbach buttoned up good and tight."

He finished making his sandwich and took a bite. The phone rang.

Davis sighed and answered it. When he got back he said, "Zherkov. Asking the usual question." He took two bites this time before the phone rang again.

He spoke for a moment, then

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covered the mouthpiece with his hand and called over to Landers. "Muller again. He wants us to turn Auerbach over to him." He took his hand away, talked to Muller quietly, hung up, then began to make some calls himself.

NINA SAW what he was doing. She poured a mug of coffee and then began pouring it back and forth from one mug to another to cool it. Davis finished his calls and returned to the table.

Nina handed him the mug of coffee. "Here, Jim. It's cool enough to drink right down."

He smiled at her and took several swallows. "Gray," he said. "Things are getting hot; we've got to resolve this mess. I just called a meeting of the sector Managers. We'll meet at our hangar, so grab some coffee and let's go." He drained his mug with one long draft.

Landers took one more huge bite from his half-eaten sandwich and washed it down with coffee so hot that it made him gasp.

Davis kissed Nina and Landers thanked her. The two men climbed into their outsuits, put on their helmets and went out through the lock into the Martian night. It was dark now. The light from the stars and the domes shone more brightly than ever against the enfolding blackness. All the features of the colony stood out against the somber landscape, gleaming, pulsing with life, shouting to the skies that man lived here.

In short order they arrived at the American hangar. When they got inside, they found that Manager Whitcomb of the English sector was already there, pacing back and forth just inside the lock.

Whitcomb said, "Hello, Jim, Gray. I'm deucedly sorry about all this. My people are more upset than I've ever seen them. Elizabeth Hinton—you know, the sister of the murdered man—is near collapse. I think everybody in our sector is over milling around our hangar. I'll have to go back soon and talk to them and calm them down."

HE WAS interrupted by the arrival of Manager Muller. Muller shook hands with Davis and Landers, but he merely nodded at Whitcomb. Before the slight could produce any tension, Manager Zherkov came in through the lock and greeted everyone. In a ragged group, the five men walked to the small inside dome used as a meeting room by the American Council. They seated themselves around the table; Landers sat back, away from the

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table, in deference to the older men.

Whitcomb started it off. "Look. My people are all in a turmoil over this murder. Hinton was a good man. Capable, well-liked. His sister's a fine girl. My people are taking it as a personal affront. They want to make sure that Auerbach gets what's coming to him. They think we ought to be the ones to make him stand trial. What do you think?"

Muller leaned forward. "Now just a minute. That's what my people are afraid of. We understand that Hinton was forcing his attentions on Auerbach's wife. Now we do not condone murder, but we want to insure that Auerbach has a fair trial; his version must be heard. You English have nothing to do with the trial."

"But it was an Englishman killed," said Whitcomb. "We have a right in this."

"I don't see why. It is a German subject that stands accused. At least I think he stands accused. Does he, Jim?"

Davis said, "Well, we haven't done anything formal about it. He did commit the murder though. There were half a dozen witnesses to it."

"Well," said Muller. "Don't you think we ought to be the ones who ought to hold the trial? —to make certain Auerbach has a fair trial, I mean?"

"Now just a minute," broke in Whitcomb. "We can give him a fair trial. It's a British subject that's been. . ."

"Gentlemen," said Zherkov. "I understand that Gray Landers here is a lawyer. Why don't we ask him what is right to do?"

ALL EYES turned to Landers. He looked reproachfully at Davis and then said, "Well, yes; I once was a lawyer—a patent lawyer, but I'm not any more. This thing smacks of International Law, though, and I don't know anything about it."

Whitcomb said, "But this is a murder, Gray; and the murderer must pay the penalty. You agree with that, don't you?"

"Oh yes," said Landers. "But thinking as a lawyer—which I'm not any more—I find myself wondering if something like the Rule in the McNaghten Case, or maybe the Irresistible Impulse Rule should properly be applied here."

He was stopped by the look of bewilderment on the faces of the four men. Then he understood. "Oh. Those two Rules deal with the defense of insanity. This was a pretty horrible killing, and I wonder if Auerbach was sane when he did it.

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If I were his defense counsel on Earth, that's the way my thoughts would be working."

"See?" said Muller. "That's what I mean. How can Auerbach get a fair trial." He sat back and looked around. "Well, I must tell you. I radioed all the details to my government and asked for their advice. This is too much for me to decide."

There was a moment's silence and then Whitcomb said softly, "So did I."

Zherkov shifted uncomfortably in his chair and said, "I did too."

They all looked at Zherkov in surprise. Davis said, "You?"

Zherkov nodded. "Yes. I wanted to be the one who told my government, not someone else. Remember, it happened aboard my ship, a Russian ship."

DAVIS TOOK a long breath, a deep breath and said, "Well, I guess there's nothing more for us to do at this time but preserve the status quo. Anybody have any other suggestions or comments?"

They all sat quietly, staring at the table, shaking their heads.

"Well," said Davis. "Let's plan on meeting again tomorrow morning. Is that satisfactory to everyone?"

They nodded and rose from the table.

"Oh Nikolay," said Davis to Zherkov. "My wife tells me you are going to become a father. Congratulations, man. I think that's fine." He held his hand out to Zherkov.

Zherkov smiled and took the hand, flushing slightly. "Thank you. I certainly hope it's a boy."

The others offered their congratulations, then they all said good-bye and went their separate ways leaving Davis and Landers standing at the table.

"I don't like it, Gray," said Davis. "I don't like it at all. This Auerbach thing is separating us into factions. We've spent three years building this colony into a single unit, and now we're falling apart. We've got to find an answer before it's too late."

"I know," said Landers tiredly. He rubbed his hands over his face. "We'll think of something. It's even remotely possible that the Earthside Lawyers can come up with something that will solve this for us. There may be a rule or precedent right in point that will take care of everything. I'm not optimistic, though. I don't know anything about International Law, but I seem to remember Bar Association meetings where some of the boys were talking

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about what a mess it is. And that reminds me, Jim. I wish you'd quit telling everybody I'm a lawyer; I'm not a lawyer any more."

Davis smiled. "Gray, you're the only man in the entire colony with legal training. I've been ringing you in because I thought you could help. Maybe you can yet."

"I don't know what I can do. Well, okay. Let's go to bed. We have a hard day tomorrow."

SLEEP WOULD not come to Landers. Auerbach stayed on his mind. Over and over, he thought of the alternatives for punishment. The trouble was that Gray Landers was not certain that Auerbach merited punishment as much as treatment. He stretched out on his bed in the dark and then turned the light on and paced back and forth smoking a cigaret. For two hours he argued with himself, consuming his entire week's ration of cigarets. Finally he forced himself to put the problem out of his mind. He lay down on his bed and dozed. But his dozing was troubled. He heard Auerbach's choking sobs; strange shapes floated formlessly through the blackness of the night.

Landers stirred restlessly on his bed. One shape detached itself from the others and floated toward him menacingly. He tried to rise but could not. He broke out in perspiration but he could not move. The shape drew closer until it hovered over his bed. With a mighty effort of will Landers threw off the effects of sleep and flung himself at the figure. He landed on his knees, but his arms reached out and grabbed solid flesh and bone.

He twisted himself sideways and forced the thing off its feet to the floor. Landers let go his grip around the legs and drove his hands for the throat. In the dark he misjudged and his hands struck too low. He felt a swelling and a softness there that caused him to roll off, get to his feet, and turn on the light. He turned and looked down on a wide-eyed woman.

They looked at each other and said nothing. Landers knew without being told that this was Elizabeth Hinton.

HE SAW A blue-eyed girl with short brown hair. Her eyes were set up high under the eyebrow ridges; there were dark circles under each eye. The cheek bones were prominent and the nose was long and straight. The mouth was wide and the lips were full and soft. Landers saw that she was not a pretty girl; her face was too rangy, too long.

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She rolled over on her side, put a hand on the floor, and rose to her feet in one sweeping singing motion. Landers was amazed at the fluid grace of it. That simple act of getting up off the floor told of a fineness of muscular tone seldom met with. It clothed the girl with a grace and beauty that went beyond the physical appearance of her face.

She stepped back a pace, to be a little further away from Landers, and again the beauty of her motion struck him. Here was a girl whose slightest stirrings could not help but be a liquid flow of bewitching poetry. And Landers watched, hoping she would move again.

She was a tall girl and she wore one of those coveralls that so many of the young women in the colony wore, form-fitting with a bit of embroidery here and there. She was a lean girl, but with a roundness at the hip and chest that made her look less lean, less tall.

They stood and looked at each other in silence and neither one felt uncomfortable under the close scrutiny of the other.

Landers broke the silence first. "You are Elizabeth Hinton."

She nodded. "Yes." Her voice was low and good to hear.

"Miss Hinton. I am very sorry about your brother. It was a terrible thing. Please accept my condolences."

Her eyes darkened as he first began to talk but then flashed fire as he finished. "You," she said scathingly. "You say you are sorry. But you are the one who said this murderer—this Auerbach creature—was insane, so he shouldn't be punished. My brother never tried to take Auerbach's wife; it wasn't that way at all. You. And you're supposed to be a lawyer. Is that what the law stands for? To let a murderer go free?"

LANDERS sighed. "Everybody keeps telling me I'm a lawyer and then giving me hell when I talk like one." He reached for his pack of cigarets, then crumbled it and flung it in a corner when he found it empty. "Look, Miss Hinton. I never said that Auerbach should not be punished; all I did was suggest that the man might have been insane. Now is that so immoral?" He began to get angry. "And what's the idea, anyway? You come in here, waking me up out of a sound sleep, with the gall to give me a bawling out for my honest opinion. Who do you think you are? I've got enough troubles without having to defend myself against every body

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who doesn't like what I say. What do you..."

Elizabeth Hinton had dropped to the edge of the bed and was quietly sobbing, face in hands.

Landers went over and sat beside her. He put a hand on her shoulder and said, "I'm sorry, Miss Hinton. Elizabeth. I'm sorry. I guess I'm not awake yet; I had no right talking to you like that at a time like this. Please forgive me." He gave her his handkerchief.

She took it and wiped her eyes and blew her nose. She started to say something, but the phone rang.

Landers answered it, listened tautly and exploded, *"What!"* He listened another moment, then slammed the phone back on the hanger. He jumped to the closet and began pulling on a set of work coveralls.

Elizabeth got to her feet, still holding the handkerchief. "What happened?"

"The Germans. They've gone into the Russian sector to the Water Station and cut the water off to the entire rest of the colony. I've got to get over there and see what damage they... Hey!"

He reached out and grabbed a shoulder of her coveralls as she flew past him toward the door. Her momentum sprung the zipper at her throat and pulled the coverall down over one shoulder. He held on and half turned and spun her back toward the bed. She fell half across it and lay looking up at him.

"No you don't. Your presence there would be all we'd need. You are a firecracker right now, so you stay with me."

HE STOPPED, his eyes fixed on the soft whiteness of her exposed shoulder. An unaccustomed tightness gathered at the base of his throat. She noticed his gaze and hastily pulled the coverall back in place; a light flush suffused her cheeks.

Landers shook his head to snap out of it and finished putting on his clothes. He went over to the phone and dialed a number. While he waited for an answer he said, "Stay there, now. I'm going to see if I can get some water from the Oxygen Station. If you..." He talked into the phone. "This is Landers. How's the oxygen stock." He waited. "Good. Use everything except that stock for water synthesis. Yes, all of it. Pump it into storage tanks. Don't give a drop to anybody unless they carry a note from me. Okay. Go to it."

He hung up and began making more calls, alerting the va-

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rious units under his control. He checked back with Davis and outlined his proposed course of action and got approval. He got in touch with the hangar chief and arranged for the entire hanger crew to meet him at the hanger immediately. And he warned everyone about the water situation and issued strict orders about water conservation.

Then he turned to Elizabeth. "Miss Hinton, you stay here. I can't spare a man to take you back home now, but I will as soon as I get back. You stay here and don't go outside. It's dangerous out there."

"I will not," she said.

"What? Look here. I can't wait around and play games with you. Now you wait here until..."

"No."

"Now you listen to me." He leveled a finger at her. "You're not going outside this night. You'll stir up trouble wherever you go. So just..."

SHE ROSE from the bed, and he found himself more interested in watching her than in continuing the lecture. She walked over to him and stood in front of him with her hands on her hips. "I'm going with you," she said, "so let's stop wasting time and get started. Where are we going?"

He started to argue, but then a wisdom beyond his years and experience took hold. He nodded and said, "Come on."

They went to the lock of the bachelor quarters and slipped into outsuits and helmets. Once outside, Landers increased the oxygen flow and broke into a trot. Elizabeth matched his stride and they were soon at the hanger. They passed in through the lock and found a few men already there.

Landers immediately set several men to lining up all available tenders near the great lock. As more men came in, Landers told them the situation and described how they were going to move down to the Water Station and try to get the water flowing again to the various sectors.

In another twenty minutes, the crew was ready. The fifteen tenders moved into the great lock and paused while the air was pumped back into the hangar. Then they passed outside and slowly moved forward while the radio contact from tender to tender was checked. Landers was in the lead car with a driver and Elizabeth. Davis stayed back in the hangar with another group of men in case anything should develop there.

The beacons over the hangars at the four corners of the

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space field flooded most of the four-square-mile field with light. The light was bright enough to see by as Landers and his men skirted the edge of the field heading due south. They kept their own lights out.

THEY RODE in silence. The fat tires of the tenders made a purring sound on the hard-packed red ground. The men strained forward to see what lay ahead. A mile from the American hangar, they swept into the Russian sector. Two miles further south, they could see for the first time a lot of activity around the Water Station. Lights from tenders flitted back and forth; flashlight beams stabbed the sky and the ground and played over the figures of running men. Landers and his men rode in wedge-shaped formation to within three hundred yards of the Station before they were noticed and several tenders left the milling group and darted toward them.

Landers ordered his men to switch to the normal channel of radio communication and stand by. Then he called to the approaching tenders, "This is Landers. We've come down from the American sector to get the water flowing. Who are you?"

A deep voice answered, "Good. We need more men. This is Krillitch. The Germans have spot-welded the valves. Have you got any riggers with you to help repair them?"

A voice with an Irish brogue cut in. "Sure there are eight of us here, Gray. Where do you want us?"

"Krillitch," said Landers. "We've got eight riggers for you. Take them away."

There followed some conversation among the Russians, and then a tender pealed off followed by four American tenders.

Krillitch said, "There's a dozen German tenders around here trying to do some more damage. Hang a handkerchief behind the drivers window so we can identify you. Good. Now let's round up these fools."

THE REMAINING eleven American tenders joined the twenty-four Russian tenders and began the weird job of trying to box in the German tenders. It was tedious work; in most instances, three tenders were needed to immobilize one. On two occasions, wheels locked and ripped off leaving four tenders sagging to their sides on the cold ground. The top speed limit of ten miles an hour saved many a life that night. And in the end all the German tenders stood motion-

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less inside a tight circle of Russian and American tenders.

The men got out to pick up the men on foot. There was some minor struggling, but soon the Germans all stood docilely in a group. Hand-to-hand fighting in an outsuit was unwise; a slight tear in the suit could be fatal in a very short time.

And so the fight ended, shortly after it began. The men began to walk back to their tenders. Then, without warning, out of the northwest another group of tenders rolled silently out of the night. They pulled up just short of the men on foot. The doors opened and men spilled out and flung themselves indiscriminately on the standing Americans, Germans, and Russians.

Muffled grunts and curses rang thinly through the rare atmosphere. Groups rolled on the ground; feet lashed out; wrenches and pinch-bars clanged off helmets or thudded into shoulders and arms.

Landers side-stepped the rush of a big suited figure but left a leg sticking out; the man fell heavily to the ground and was immediately pounced on by someone else. Landers looked at the melee with a sick heart. At one moment, he was about to hurl himself into the fight; at the next he was about to leave and return to the American sector. But he reconsidered.

He knew that many of the Americans were close to him, since they had been standing together when the attack came. It was hard to distinguish one form from another in the darkness, but Landers did it. He moved from one knot of fighting men to another to pick out his men. Several times he found himself attacked and had to halt his search to defend himself. And each time he found one of his men he shouted an order at him and the man left the fight and disappeared in the darkness. When he'd found eight of them he followed them out of the fight and joined them at the parked tenders.

"Each man take a tender," he said, "and form a line with them. Turn your bright lights on and we'll chase these guys that are on foot. If they don't quit the brawl, we'll run them down. Go to it."

LANDERS got into his tender. Elizabeth Hinton was still waiting in it. "What happened?"

"Some of your compatriots loused things up after we got it all under control. Now we've got to break up a real free-for-all. Sit tight, now; this may be a rough ride."

He pulled the tender forward

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and waited for the other eight to line up alongside him. The line was not very straight in the dark, but it served. At Landers' command, they all turned their lights on at once and began to move forward.

They bore down on the area of struggling men. The threatening menace of the big fat tires looming behind the lights was too great to be ignored. Individual fights broke up as the tenders slowly drew close enough to roll over the men who didn't give way. As the line moved ahead, a wave of men grew in front of it. The men on foot stayed in the path of light and fled in front of it. Each man acted the way a rabbit does when it finds itself caught in a beam of light at night; it does not dare attack the forbidding wall of blackness that threatens on each side.

In a short time, there was no more fighting. The tenders herded the men ahead of them toward the Water Station and finally stopped, forming a semicircle around the western side of the standing men. Landers jumped out of his tender and stood in front of the headlights. He raised his voice loud enough so it could be heard through his helmet and carry through the thin atmosphere.

"Have you gone crazy? Get those injured men into the Station. Hurry before some of them lose their oxygen."

ABOUT THIRTY men detached themselves from the group and hobbled toward the Station. Some clutched rips in their outsuits. Some pressed hands over cracked helmets. And some limped or nursed an injured shoulder or arm.

One man walked toward Landers. "What's the idea? These Germans cut off the water. Do you know what that means? Our women and children need water. These bustards have cut off the only water supply in the entire colony. Are we supposed to let them get away with that? First, one of them murders one of our best men and now they cut off the water for the whole colony. What'll they do next? Murder us all? Well, we're not going to let them get away with any more. You're not going to stop us, either. We'll get this Auerbach and hang him from the highest dome in the colony and we'll fix anybody who tries to stop us. That includes you." He jumped forward and swung a wrench at Landers.

Landers had noted the increasing violence of the man's speech, and he was ready. He ducked under the wrench, grabbed the man around the

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middle, and threw him to the ground over one leg. He jammed a foot down hard on the hand that carried the wrench, then dropped a knee on the man's throat.

A small group of men detached themselves from the large group and began to move toward Landers. Others lay hold of them and began to restrain them. The entire crowd stirred restlessly. Someone swung a wrench.

LANDERS got to his feet and pulled the prone man up beside him. He turned to face the turbulent crowd and shouted, "Wait! Wait, all of you. You English, listen. I've got someone here I want you to hear. Don't do anything for a minute; stay where you are."

He turned and ran to his tender and leaned in toward Elizabeth. "Look," he said. "You talk to these men and tell them to go home. They're your friends and friends of your brother. Tell them you don't want vengeance or anything like that. Tell them..."

"I will not," she said. "I want to see that murderer punished. I certainly..."

He reached over and grabbed the shoulder of her outsuit and pulled her over to him. Their helmets touched. He spoke, staring into her eyes. "Look, Elizabeth. This is beyond you or me or Auerbach or your brother. This whole colony can collapse right here and now. All the effort of thousands of people for many years will come to nothing this night. You can stop it. You must stop it! Now go out there and tell them to go home."

He looked into her eyes, the lines around his mouth and nose drawn deep. She stared back, eyes wide. He backed out of the tender, pulling her after him. He stood her on her feet and let go her shoulder and took her arm. Still looking in her eyes he guided her around the tender and led her near to where the group of men stood. He let go her arm and said softly, "Now tell them."

She faced the group, silently. They watched her. The tender lights illuminated her face; the men knew who she was, and they waited for her to speak.

For a long moment she stood there, and then finally she said, "Please go home."

No one moved. Everyone looked at Elizabeth Hinton. And she said again, "Please go home."

And then slowly, so slowly, a few men began to drift toward the tenders. More joined them and soon there was a general movement of dispersion.

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LANDERS stepped in front of Elizabeth and said, "If there are any riggers in this group, they can use you at the Station to help get the water flowing again." Several men turned back and headed for the Station. Landers went on. "We're making water up at the Oxygen Station. We can't make much but it will have to keep us all going until this Station goes back on the line. When your storage tanks go dry come up and we'll issue a ration of water."

There was a general rumble of agreement, and people began to seek out the tender they had ridden in. Several tenders lurched into motion and moved over to the four disabled tenders. Other men gathered around and they began to discuss the best way to get tenders back to a hangar for repair.

Landers watched for a moment until he saw that there would be no more fighting, then he turned to Elizabeth. "Let's go."

He led her to his tender and helped her in and then got in himself. He started it up, swung it around and headed due north in the direction of the American hangar. To his right, the sky was turning a light gray with a touch of rosiness on the horizon. Dawn was breaking.

He looked at Elizabeth's profile, sharply etched against the lightening sky. She sat stiffly beside him, staring straight ahead. Gradually he became aware of an aura of hostility coming from her.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

She stared stonily ahead without answering.

"What is it, Elizabeth?" He reached over and put a hand on her knee.

She brushed his hand away with a sudden motion.

HE TURNED his attention to the route ahead, a slow rage gathering inside him. His hands tightened on the wheel, his jaw muscles stood out. A quarter of a mile they went and neither said a word.

Then she spoke, so softly he couldn't hear the first few words, "...yet you made me. My own people too. You made me turn against them, friends of my brother. The only people I have on Mars, and I took sides against them. Englishmen, my countrymen. You—you." She turned her head to face him. "Gray Landers, I think you are a miserable wretch. You'd do anything to protect that murderer. Even force me to do what you want." She

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looked around. "Where are you taking me? You take me home. Take me home this instant."

For the first time, Landers realized that he was heading toward the American hangar. Without a word he swung the tender to the left to go west, where the English hangar was. His anger abated somewhat but he didn't know what to say to her. He realized his inability to talk, to explain things. He almost sneered at himself; the great Landers, the man with the ready answer, the quick solution. But as he thought about it, he came to realize that he didn't have any answers to talk about. So he guided the tender on, wishing he could talk to her, but not having anything to say; he felt terrible. The ride ended in silence.

Landers stopped in front of the English hangar. Elizabeth got out and slammed the door with a bang as old as woman. He watched her go into the lock, the early dawnlight of Mars showing the sleek form of her, the smooth motion of her. Landers hurriedly turned the tender east toward the American hangar. He drove just inside the northern boundary of the space field. Halfway across, he could look south and see the slight torn marks on the field marking the spot where the *Moscow* had fallen. It seemed incredible that the ship had fallen just a few short hours earlier.

Landers was tired, very tired, yet he could not look forward to any sleep. He was used to working long hours but somehow this was different. He saw nothing but trouble ahead. He was used to trouble, too, but this time his heart wasn't in it. There was no reason to work, to plan; he sighed and sagged in his seat and wearily completed his journey.

DAVIS WAS on the phone when Landers walked into his office. Davis waved him into a chair and Landers gratefully sat down. Several of the section leaders were there, too; one of them handed Landers a thermos of hot black coffee. He poured a cup and swallowed half of it in a single gulp. He rested his head against the back of the chair and closed his eyes while Davis continued to talk. Someone nudged Landers and gave him a cigaret. He smiled his thanks, lighted it, and inhaled deeply. Another swallow of coffee, another drag, and some of the cold deep inside him began to thaw. He listened to the sound of Davis's voice and the low conversation of the others, without hearing what was said. He unwound a little

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inside in the warm friendliness of the room.

Then Davis hung up and turned to him and said, "Auerbach is still asleep." And the inside tightness grew again. Landers finished his coffee and said nothing. After a sharp look at him, Davis went on with his business with the section leaders.

Again Landers leaned his head back. He sat with his eyes closed and every once in a while he took a pull on his cigaret. He finished it and ground it out and lay back again. He dozed, and he hardly heard the phone ring. He did not hear Davis answer, but he did hear Davis's explosive ejaculation, "What?"

It jolted Landers out of his daze and sat him up. Davis listened a moment longer and said, "I'll send someone right over." He hung up and looked around the room and said "A group of men just broke into the Hospital dome and tried to take Auerbach out. Hagen says they beat them off but maybe they'll be back. Gray, you had better get over there now. Set up some sort of guard. Do whatever you have to do to make sure nobody gets Auerbach away from us."

Landers ran out the door and found the hangar chief on duty. He explained the situation and asked for a six-man guard, starting immediately. Then he ran to a lock and slipped into an outsuit. He grabbed up a helmet and stepped into the lock. He dropped the helmet over his head and hit the exhaust switch as he tightened the helmet down. The pumps swiftly began to pump the air out of the lock and back into the hangar.

HAD LANDERS not been so tired and pressed for time, he would have noted the slight cant to the helmet he wore. The joint where the helmet fitted onto the outsuit was a threaded joint, and Landers had cross-threaded it. He would have noticed the increase difficulty in breathing except he was already panting from the running he had done. And so the air in the lock became exhausted and the outer door swung open. Landers took two steps toward it, and anoxia took over.

The early morning landscape shimmered and surged and flashed into a homogeneous grey color. Landers fell to his knees; for the first time he realized what had happened to him. He did not even try to keep his vision in focus; he did not try to stand. On his hands and knees, he crawled to a wall and groped his way back along it. His arms and legs began to

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go numb. He pushed on a few more feet and then collapsed on his face. With startling clarity of mind he could feel his senses grow dim to be replaced by a feeling of heat and lightness. Drawing on his last reserves, he forced himself to all fours and crawled on. No longer could he feel whether or not he pressed against the wall, but he crawled on. The time came when his mind blanked out, though his body still moved. It brushed against the floor switch, then fell and lay motionless.

The outer door closed and air began to pour into the lock. The air flowed into Landers's suit through the same imperfect joint from which it had escaped. The incoming air plus the air from the oxygen flasks in the outsuit soon built up to a livable pressure.

LANDERS' first awareness was of a ringing sound in his head. He shook his head and rolled up to a sitting position. Memory came back; he reached up to the helmet and checked its seating in the plastic ring of the outsuit. The crossthreading became apparent. He rotated the helmet and took it off. At the full air pressure of the lock, he sat and breathed deeply time after time. Soon the oxygen deficiency in his body was made up and he began to feel a little dizzy. When he felt the dizziness, he stood up, put the helmet on and seated it carefully. He checked the pressure in the underarm outsuit flasks; finding it satisfactory, he once more threw the switch to exhaust the air. When the outer door opened, he stood for a moment to make certain the suit was functioning properly. It was, and he ran outside.

He headed toward the Hospital dome, trotting with ground-eating strides. And as he ran his anger began to rise. The thought that he had almost died from such a trivial accident annoyed him beyond measure. It had been a year since anyone in the colony had crossthreaded a helmet. The very children knew better than that. Yet he had allowed himself to get into such a state that he had neglected one of the fundamentals of life on Mars.

He cursed under his breath. He damned Auerbach; he damned Hinton and Elizabeth, and he damned stupid people everywhere—including himself. His stride lengthened and when he reached the Hospital dome he skidded on the floor of the lock to keep himself from crashing into the inner door. He hit the switch and had his helmet off before the pressure built up to maximum. The in-

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ner door opened and he followed it in. Ignoring the rack he flung the helmet into a corner and shouted, "Hagen. Doc Hagen. Where the hell are you?"

Hagen came out of an inside dome, followed by several of the men who had gone to the Water Station with Landers. "Hello, Gray. Glad you're . . ."

"What happened here?" said Landers.

HAGEN LOOKED at him in surprise. "Well, a bunch of the boys brought in a couple of fellows that had been hurt in the fight down at the Water Station. I hear you were there." Landers nodded impatiently.

Hagen continued. "One of them had a fractured clavicle, and I had to spend a good deal of time with him. Most of the boys went home but these hung around." He waved at the men around him. "It's a good thing they did. Five guys with masks over their faces came in and demanded Auerbach. I gave them an argument, and one of them hit me on the head with something; I spent the next few minutes sleeping."

"Yeah," said one of the others. "We were in with Joe Dickey chewing the fat. We heard the Doc here hollering and then we heard this scuffle. We came charging out just in time to see a guy clout the Doc with a wrench. We piled into them and had quite a time while it lasted. They must have been surprised to find us here because they beat it as soon as they could. We tried to keep them here but they outnumbered us. I guess that's about it?"

He turned to the others inquiringly. They nodded. One of the others said, "Yeah. They didn't seem to be very well organized. They weren't sure of what they were doing—hadn't planned it very well. Soon as we showed up, all they wanted was out. If I'd been with that bunch I'd a had Auerbach out of here and dead by now."

Landers nodded. "Okay. Look, I've got some men coming over here to stand guard. Will you fellows stand by til they get here?"

They all said yes.

"Thanks," said Landers. "Grab yourselves a length of pipe or anything long and hard. If anybody tries to come in here with so much as a frown on his face, smash his head open. Don't take any guff from anybody. Got it?"

"Yeah, Gray." Their eyes lighted up. "That's the way, man. Don't worry about a thing here." They went off to find weapons.

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LANDERS turned to Hagen. "Where's the phone, Doc?"

"Follow me." Hagen turned away and Landers fell in beside him. Hagen glanced at him out of the corner of his eyes and shrugged his shoulders. They turned into an inner dome and Hagen waved at the phone. Landers went over and dialed a number. He waited a moment, then said, "Hello, Jim. Landers. Say tell me. Have you heard when the Water Station will go back in the line? This afternoon, eh. Well, look, Jim. I think we better break off all normal operations and set up guards at all our installations. This situation has got out of hand; we don't know what's going to happen next. These madmen are just as likely to puncture a dome next. What do you think?"

He listened and then said, "Good. I'll be right back and set things up."

He banged the phone down and said to Hagen, "Watch yourself here, Doc. Things may happen." He ran out of the inner dome and went to the lock. He retrieved the helmet from the corner and dropped it in place as the air exhausted from inside the lock. Once outside he again broke into a trot, heading back to the hangar.

Back inside the hangar, Landers picked up the hangar chief and a couple of his assistants and they all went to Davis's office. The section leaders were still there. Landers immediately began to outline his plan.

"It seems to me that the trouble spot will be the Oxygen Station. We've got water there and if the shortage grows acute in the next few hours, anything can happen. I think we ought to have fifty men up there who don't mind a fight. We'll arm them with steel pipe. In fact we'll arm all our men with steel pipe. We also want a good-sized guard around the Fissionables Plant and around the hangar here. Every vital installation may need protection."

"How about Hydroponics?" someone asked.

"Good point. Maybe we can work something out with Zherkov."

Davis said, "I hear that Number Two Hydroponics is in bad shape. They've got a line drawn right through it to separate the part that lies in the German sector from the part that lies in the English sector. So it isn't working very efficiently."

LANDERS nodded. "I hope we don't get into the same sort of situation in our Hydroponics with the Russians. Are we still on good terms with them?"

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"As far as I know," said Davis.

"Good. Look, Jim. This lack of water is the most immediately pressing problem we have. Why don't we send a few of our best men down to the Water Station to see if we can speed things up? There are three or four down there now, but they could probably use some more real experts."

"Right," said Davis. "Set it up. I'll make arrangements for the women and children. Keep in touch with me. Oh, by the way, I got a radio message from Earth. The Attorney General says we are the ones to try Auerbach. They don't like a murder in our territory."

Landers looked surprised. "What happened to him? He usually lets us alone. Well, see you later." And he went out followed by most of the people who had crowded into the room.

Outside in the hangar Landers took the hangar chief to one side and said, "Send three of your best men down to the Water Station. Tell them to get the water flowing as fast as possible."

"Right, Gray."

"Oh. And set a couple of men to cutting up lengths of pipe. We want everybody ready to protect himself."

"Right."

Landers turned to the rest of the men. "Pass this around to everybody. No holding back if anything starts. The time for gentle treatment is past. If anybody from the other sectors starts anything, smash him down. Don't take anything from anyone. Got that?"

THERE WAS a chorus of yeps, and Landers began to assign the men to their posts. In a half hour the job was done. Landers went back to Davis's office. "Everything is okay so far, Jim. Anything new?"

Davis shook his head. "Not much. Whitcomb called. Says he wants a meeting soon. He's heard from the Prime Minister and is ready to take a position in the Auerbach case."

"Any idea what the position is?"

"No. He was very careful not to give any hint. I don't like it; that's not like Perce. He's usually the most cooperative of men. They all are. But this Auerbach business has quartered us as neatly as possible. I tell you, Gray, if someone sat down and tried to figure out a way to break up the colony, they couldn't pick a better way than this. I don't know where we are going."

"I don't either, Jim. But I'll tell you one thing. We're not giving up. This colony—or at

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least the American part of it, is going to stay put. The others can pull out if they want. We stay."

Davis walked over to him and put a hand on his shoulder. "That's the way I like to hear you talk, Gray. We'll try. But five hundred people can't live here alone. We need the two thousand we've got; we can't be self-sufficient with any fewer. It would take a long time to get the caliber of people we need from the United States alone, so we've got to try to make it work with the people we have here and now. It'd take ten years to start over, even if the country went along with another try after this one failed. We've got to find an answer to this Auerbach situation, and we've got to find it soon."

LANDERS stood quietly, staring at the floor. He looked up and said, "I guess you're right, Jim. We can't do it alone. That makes it rough. But we'll find something."

Davis shook Landers' shoulder and then dropped his hand. "That's the stuff. Think about it. See what you can come up with." He turned and walked wearily back to his desk.

Landers said, "Jim, I think I'll make the rounds and see that the boys have things set up right. I'll call you from each station."

"Okay, Gray. Good luck."

Landers smiled at him and left. He checked around the hangar and found the men alert and ready for anything that might happen. Some were leaning on their lengths of pipe and some were swinging them through the air. A few more were practicing with each other, using the lengths of pipe as if they were quarter-staves. Landers took a tender and headed north toward the Oxygen Station.

He covered the ground in short order and went in through the lock. Just inside there were several men arranged in a semicircle around the inner door of the lock. They relaxed when they saw who it was.

Landers said, "Keep your helmets handy. These guys may puncture the dome. Have a man stay outside to check on who comes close to the dome. Don't wait till someone gets inside."

"Okay, Gray," one of them said. "Say, there's a guy who wants water. We wouldn't give him any because he didn't have your signature. What'll we do with him."

"Where is he?"

"Here I am, Mr. Landers." A man detached himself and came forward and handed Landers a note. Landers took

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it and read it. It was a note from Whitcomb asking that the bearer be given water. Landers recognized Whitcomb's signature.

Landers asked, "How much water do we have on hand?"

"About five hundred gallons."

"Give him a hundred gallons." Landers handed the note back.

The man turned away, accompanied by another.

"If any of our people come for water," said Landers. "Give them half of what we have on hand. Everybody else must have a note from me. Here's where I'll be..."

After checking with Davis on the phone he left the Oxygen Station and went over through the rough country to the Fissionables Plant. Then he checked in at several of the mines. He was heading southwest toward Hydroponics when his radio came to life. It was Davis, and he wanted him back at the hangar immediately. "Nothing wrong, yet. Just get back here quick. We're going to have a meeting."

V

LANDERS veered in a westerly direction and soon reached the American hangar. He took his tender in through one of the medium-sized locks. Once inside, he looked around in surprise. There were an unusually large number of people in the hangar. Very few of them were Americans. Landers looked closer and recognized some Germans, some Englishmen, and some Russians among the people gathered here and there. The groups were not distributed; each nationality kept to itself.

Landers went right up to Davis's office. Manager Whitcomb was already there along with his assistant, George Hoyt. They shook hands all around. Davis said, "The sector Managers all agreed that we should have a meeting to settle this Auerbach thing. Seems everybody now knows what he's supposed to do. The others ought to be here in a few minutes."

"Good," said Landers. He turned to Whitcomb. "How're things in your sector, Perce?"

"Well, not too bad, Gray. I'm sorry about that brawl down at the Water Station. A few of our people are hot-headed, but they're calming down now."

"A lot of the people are hot-headed, Perce. Too many of them. They are going to have to change their ways, fast." Landers' voice was flat and he spoke through tight lips. The others looked at him in sur-

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prise. Hoyt was about to say something when Fred Muller came in with Fritz Hortman, his assistant. Again there was a lot of handshaking, but the hands did not stay clasped as long as was customary, the smiles were thin, the eyes did not meet. A hush fell over the group and the outside noise became noticeable. Muller went to the table and sat down; Hortman sat down beside him.

Manager Zherkov walked in with Luzhin. More restrained greetings.

Davis said, "We're all here, gentlemen, so let's get started."

THEY ALL moved to the table and sat down. The noise from outside grew louder. Landers got up and went out the door to see what the noise was all about. As he went around the inner dome and got a look out across the main hangar, he stopped and stared. The hangar was almost full of people. Three separate and distinct groups stood there, many men and women, but—Landers noticed with a sinking feeling in his stomach—no children.

Around the outskirts of the crowd Landers saw a few of his own men, very few. And he remembered that he had sent most of the Americans out to guard the various stations. He broke out in a cold sweat. Practically every adult in the colony was there to see how the Managers resolved the Auerbach problem. The solution couldn't possibly please them all. What pleased the Germans would not please the English; and the Russians were angry, too.

Momentarily, Landers was infuriated with himself for stripping the hangar of men. But it was too late for regrets. He returned to the office and said, "Almost everybody in the colony is out there. Maybe we ought to hold the meeting out front where they can be in on it. Remember—the way we did when we made the decision to let wives and other women come to the colony?"

The others agreed. The four assistants picked up the large table and carried it through the door of the inner dome and set it down out in the huge hangar. Davis called a couple of technicians over and asked for a public address system. By the time the eight men were settled, there were several microphones at the table. The noise of the crowd had increased when the table appeared but it subsided immediately. Once the eight men were seated, the entire crowd sat down on the floor so that everyone could see what was going on.

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WHITCOMB, Muller, and Zherkov each pulled a large bundle of papers out of their breast pockets and began to arrange them in front of them. Davis sat with his hands folded in his lap. Landers looked at the men at the table, annoyed at the tension in the air.

Each one showed the signs of strain—dark circles under the eyes, a paleness of the face, deeply etched lines running from the nose to the corners of the mouth, a tenseness of manner. Davis had lost his youthful appearance. For the first time since Landers had known him, Jim Davis looked his full age.

It was Zherkov who spoke first. "Gentlemen, my government takes the position that we should be the ones to take custody of this Auerbach and subject him to trial. The crime was committed aboard a Russian ship. According to the rules of International Law—" and here he read from the papers in front of him, "a public ship is wholly exempt from local jurisdiction. The *Moscow*, since she was serving the entire colony, is a public ship. So by analogy with the International Law that governs ships in ports, the *Moscow* is exterritorial and anything that happens aboard her is Russian business solely. So we should take Auerbach.

"Now, Jim," he said to Davis, "you will agree with this, I think, because this principle was established by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1812 by your Chief Justice Marshall. The case is called *The Schooner Exchange*."

Whitcomb leaned forward and said, "Now just a minute, Nikolay. I have *The Schooner Exchange* case on my list, too. Our situation here is different. A murder has been committed. The immunity of a public ship is not complete, not where murder is concerned. Such crimes of violence affect the port in which the ship lies. Now I have here the case of—" he tilted his head back to read, *"Chung Chi Chiung v. the King*.

"In that case, a British subject committed a murder on a Chinese public ship in Hong Kong territorial waters. Then he tried to commit suicide and they took him to a Hong Kong hospital. Later, a Hong Kong court convicted him of murder. The Privy Council said that even if the ship had any immunities, China had waived them; therefore, the Hong Kong court did have jurisdiction to try the case. Now the analogy with our situation here is perfectly apparent. The

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Americans have Auerbach in a hospital. They can try him if they want, because you have waived any immunities you might have had by letting Auerbach go into an American hospital. So my government takes the position that the Americans have jurisdiction here and they should try him."

ZHERKOV shook his head and said, "My government takes the position that since the murder took place aboard a Russian ship, we should be the ones to try him."

"Now just a moment," said Muller, spreading out his papers. He read, "My government states that there are three rules that limit criminal jurisdiction in International Law. Germany takes a slightly different position from the United States and Great Britain; we follow a different rule. Where the act is directed against the security of the state, that state may assume jurisdiction. German security has been threatened here, so we should have jurisdiction."

"For heavens sake, Fred," said Whitcomb. "It was a German who committed the murder. How could that threaten the security of Germany or the German sector?"

Muller shifted in his seat. "I don't mean the murder—ah, the killing. The thing that started all this off was Hinton's acts over in the German sector. Hinton set the whole thing in motion while he was in the German sector. Those acts give us jurisdiction. This principle was established in the *Lotus* case. It was stated by the Permanent Court of the League of Nations."

"Oh now, Fred. You can't really believe that anything Hinton did will determine who tries Auerbach. Why we don't even know if Hinton did anything wrong."

"That's my government's position," said Muller.

THE PEOPLE sitting on the hangar floor stirred restlessly. They began talking among themselves and the noise grew greater in volume. Landers muttered something in anger and Davis leaned forward and said, "What was that, Gray?"

Landers spoke harshly into a microphone. "I said that the Earthside lawyers were sure busy last night."

Davis said, "Yes. I understand that Earth itself has worked up a furor over this thing. The United Nations and the rest of the planet has divided up into camps; they are in as bad shape as we are in trying to arrive at an answer to this situation."

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The crowd quieted. Zherkov began to speak again. Davis waved his secretary over and whispered something to her. Landers looked out over the crowd, seeking a slim, erect figure. He could not find it, and he grew more annoyed than ever. He tried to relax, listening to the arguments passing back and forth across the table.

The more he listened the more angry he got. His mind went back to the days when he had argued cases before the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, and the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, and the Supreme Court itself, where the Justices baited and prodded the lawyers. He remembered the thrill of advocacy, the pride that comes from a well-argued case when nine Justices could not confuse or confound his position. Yet he'd left it to return to his first love, chemical engineering.

A funny bird was the patent lawyer, a weird blend of technology and law. He was as much a lawyer as any other lawyer, yet not quite considered so. What was it that some colleague had said? A patent lawyer is a man who talks like a lawyer when he's with scientists, and like a scientist when he's with lawyers. Maybe that was right; then, here and now, Gray Landers was a lawyer. Why not talk like one?

LANDERS sat up straighter in his chair, and the anger gathered like a lump of fire inside him. He knew practically nothing about International Law, but he knew something that non-lawyers seldom realized. Facts were often more important than Law. Once the facts of any situation were clear, so that everybody agreed on them, the Law was easy; for the most part, it followed common sense.

Landers pulled his feet in under him, and his muscles tensed. The argument about cases and position waxed ever hotter around the table. Many of the spectators were now on their feet. The noise from the crowd was growing louder again. Landers almost exploded then, but he forced himself to think. He remembered Darrow, Clarence Darrow—one of the greatest advocates of all time. Darrow had resolved country-shaking cases by making certain that the jury understood every tiny detail about every facet of the case being tried. And with complete understanding, the answer was obvious. Darrow knew the law, but his greatest cases were won without its aid.

And now the uproar was growing. The Managers were

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pounding the table. Most of the crowd were on their feet, shouting, some shaking fists.

Landers could no longer control himself. He pulled a microphone over to him and turned up the volume. His voice surged out through the huge hangar. *"Are you all finished with the colony?"*

The noise subsided somewhat. The Managers silently looked at Landers, their papers scattered in front of them.

Gray Landers went on, his voice hoarse and shaking. "I am a lawyer. I am a member of the bar of the District of Columbia. There are a few things about this situation I'd like to comment on."

Complete silence slowly set in. He waited a moment, thinking in the back of his mind about the respect that most people gave to a doctor or lawyer giving his professional opinion.

LANDERS turned the volume down and said, "First, I'd like to ask a simple question: has anyone here defined the precise problem we are faced with? Do any of the Managers know exactly what it is we are quarreling about?"

"Certainly," said Muller angrily. "We're trying to see who should give Auerbach a trial."

"No," snapped Landers. "That is not the problem at all. The problem is this. Where a German kills an Englishman aboard a Russian ship in American territory on Mars, what procedure are you going to use to decide who tries the killer. Our real problem is not who tries Auerbach; *it is how we decide who tries him.* We are fighting over a question of procedure."

Landers sat back and stared gloomily at the table top and let them think about it. There wasn't a sound in the hangar, except for the noise made by a few men coming in through the locks. Landers leaned forward and glared around at the Managers.

"It isn't important what happens to Auerbach," he said. "What is important is that justice be meted out in a way that we all know is fair. Yet this colony is tearing itself apart on the irrelevant and wrong question of who should conduct the trial. It just doesn't matter who conducts the trial. The future of the colony is the most important thing to think about, but we haven't been thinking about it.

"Look what you are doing. You're letting the Earthside lawyers make dupes out of you; you're doing just what they tell you to do. All of you. The Earthside arguments are based on four thousand years of bick-

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ering and squabbling and tugging for power among the nations. International Law they call it. Nuts. What happens to a nation who breaks the so-called International Law? Does anybody here know?"

There was silence.

"I'll tell you what happens in such a case," said Landers. "Nothing. Not a thing. The only way to make International Law stick is for some nation to go to war with the culprit. And when a nation does go to war it is never to enforce law; it is to protect property, or to get more room for people, or any of dozens of other reasons. But it is never to enforce law. International Law is a set of rules that nations obey when it serves their ends. But when International Law gets in their way, Nations simply ignore it; and no one does anything about it, except maybe protest. Yet here you sit trying to apply International Law to the most complex problem ever to confront it. Ye Gods, even the best lawyers on Earth don't know the answer. Yet you let their puerile opinions tear this colony apart. Is that good sense?"

LANDERS stared coldly at each of the Managers; then he looked fixedly at Manager Zherkov and said, "Look at the good the Russians have done us. When they came here, they soon threw off the slime of Communism; they left it behind, back on Earth. They even quit calling each other 'comrade'; a man's a man whatever you call him, and they soon learned it. They conceived the idea of the Yak Farm, after we found other animals did not thrive here. Everyone of us has found that the Russian people are good people once they get out from under power-mad dictators."

Zherkov shook his head slightly, but he did not speak. Landers went on.

"And the Russians aren't alone. The English and the Germans have been just as necessary to our welfare. Each has done a magnificent job. I only hope the Americans have done as well."

There was a low rumble from the people sitting on the floor of the hangar. Many were talking at once, but nothing ominous was coming out of the hubbub.

Landers raised the volume of the mike and said, "When our governments first set up the colony, they deliberately put essential installations in each sector to force us to cooperate with each other. It worked better than anybody thought. That was a political decision, but it turned out to be the best prac-

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tical decision too. Each sector accepted its responsibility to the utmost. We only made one mistake."

THE CROWD was quiet again so Landers turned down the power.

"The mistake we made was to keep referring to the sectors by the names of the different nationalities, like the German sector, the English sector, and so on. The mere existence of those names creates the illusion that a difference exists among us. So when we meet our first social problem, the various governments on Earth have something to seize on and use as a basis for forcing their own different isms onto us. We want none of it; we can't have it if this colony is to survive. Let me point out something that all of us have overlooked."

Landers leaned forward and spoke softly. "We are *no longer Earthmen*. We are Martians! And as Martians we must run things on Mars to suit Martians, not Earthmen. *We* make the decisions, not Earthside lawyers. We *must* throw off the ties of Earth."

He leaned back, pulling the mike to him. "With that in mind, see how easily we can decide the Auerbach case. We all agree he should have a trial but we have disagreed on who should try him. Well, now, why not have all the sector Managers sit as judges? Impanel a jury out of the entire colony. Or we may not even need a jury since the four Sector Managers will see that justice is done. There are half-a-dozen different ways to go about it, once we get International Law out of our hair. Remember, it isn't important what happens to Auerbach. Maybe Auerbach will hang, maybe he won't; it doesn't matter to the colony. But it *is* important what procedures we use to mete out justice. So why are we fighting over unworkable Earthside rules?"

Landers fell silent, and the hum of conversation filled the hangar. Davis leaned to one side and whispered to his secretary. The other Managers sat back, all of them looking thoughtful. Out on the floor several people got up and moved out of their group to another and began shaking hands. The aisles between the groups lost their sharpness as people shifted around. Then Landers spoke again.

"We have trouble ahead of us even though we work out our own procedures. For instance, suppose Auerbach receives a sentence of life imprisonment. What will we do

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with him? We can't keep a life prisoner here."

MULLER said, "How about sending prisoners — whoever they may be, back to their original country on Earth."

Landers nodded. "Good. Something like that may work out fine. Here's another thing. We're a colony, a frontier. Our justice must be fair, but it will also be different from Earth's justice. We lead a hard life and we cannot give an alleged criminal all the niceties of justice he would receive on Earth. So if we return a man to Earth, they might not carry out the sentence. But that's all right; it doesn't matter to us."

Whitcomb leaned toward a microphone and said, "Just where do you think we can draw the line between benevolent justice—justice tempered with mercy—and the harsher justice necessitated by our life here?"

"The line will draw itself," said Landers. "Where good men administer justice as best they can in each case, other men will accept it, once they understand it. That's a good point though, Perce. We will have to inform everyone here about the rules we will work under. It's already happened to me. I told you—my Lord, was it only a few hours ago—that I thought Auerbach might possibly have been insane. I was later accused of trying to find a way to get him off. So we need understanding of our new procedures, whatever they will be."

OUT ON THE floor a slim girl rose to her feet from amidst a sitting group. Landers saw the swift sure movement of her and he recognized Elizabeth. She picked her way out of the group and came forward. She reached the front row and stopped about fifteen feet from Landers. She raised her hand and pressed her fingertips against her lips and threw him a kiss. Then she sat down and watched him quietly.

Landers looked at her, a slow flush rising over his face. She continued to smile at him, and a soft chuckle ran through the crowd. Whitcomb looked at Landers with a half smile on his face and Landers' blush grew bright red. He looked at Elizabeth again and felt a thickening at the base of his throat. He forced himself to sit back and look calmly out across the hangar.

Muller said, "All right. It is best that we do not follow Earth law in our affairs. But our governments have instructed us nevertheless to do what they say. If we refuse, then what?"

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Zherkov nodded and said, "Yes. I don't think our governments will like our cutting them off. They might retaliate. Suppose they refused to send any more ships?"

Davis said, "Then we will build our own. We could do it in a few years. Anyhow, Nikolay, which government would be the first to refuse to send us a ship? What would world opinion say about such a nation?"

Muller said, "Yes, and we still have the purple lichen; they'll need that for a few years yet."

"Well," said Whitcomb. "The only remaining problem seems to be: how are we going to tell our governments? We ought to issue a joint statement of some kind. What'll we say?"

"Well now," said Davis. "I've been waiting for someone to ask that." He opened up a book in front of him and said, "I have here a document that may be just what we want. Let me read it for your consideration. I'll skip the first paragraph although it is also exactly what we need. The main body of the document reads:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and...

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Editorial

YESTERDAY'S WORLD OF TOMORROW: 1927

IT WAS the year that a unknown Air Mail pilot became an international hero, the year Captain Charles A. Lindbergh made the first nonstop flight from New York to Paris in what to present-day eyes looks like a dinky little monoplane. It seems much more wildly impossible now that the *Spirit of St. Louis* could have made the flight than it did at the time—just as a realization of the size and equipment of the *Pinto, Nina* and *Santa Maria* makes Columbus' voyages seem even more fantastic, after the event, than they must have seemed to the incredulous beforehand.

It was also the year that a motion picture ("The Jazz Singer", starring Al Jolson) was accompanied by synchronized Vitaphone sound on wax discs, for the songs. I dissent from those who claim that this was the first "talkie"; the first "talkie" was the first full-length feature movie which had a synchronized sound track on the film. Between "The Jazz Singer" and the first real talkie, (anybody remember what it was?) were pictures such as "The Patriot"—one of Emil Jannings' magnificent performances—which had sound effects; or films with a talkie sequence or two, such as "Alias Jimmy Valentine", starring the then-popular William Haines and bringing the voice of Lionel Barrymore to thousands who had never seen him on the stage.

The year had important social, political, and cultural events, but it was the scientific nine-day wonders that concern

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us, because January 1927 saw the 11th issue of Hugo Gernback's *Amazing Stories*. At that time, science fiction was concentrated on scientific marvels, rather than extrapolations of current social trends, politics, etc. (I am considering only stories which had their initial appearance in the magazine, not the reprints of Wells, Serviss, and others whose interest was far more catholic and far closer to present-day orientations in science fiction.)

There were no rocket ships in science fiction written for 1927 consumption. The great interplanetary vessels that sailed between worlds in Capt. H. G. Bishop's "On The Martian Way" derived from the discoveries of

> ...the great Sir Francis Winston who had first expounded and proved that the gravitational attraction of any mass had characteristics peculiarly its own; and that just as certain substances arrest certain colors of the spectrum and permit others to pass through; certain magnetic fields could be created which were impermeable to the attraction of certain masses, though uninfluencing that of others; thus first rendering interplanetary passage possible.

Captain Bishop's story had a number of interesting elements: ships lost in meteoric storms, orbits plotted by computing machines, ships diverted from their orbits by unaccounted-for disturbances, ships drawn into comets or caught by the sun, self-sacrifice of a character to decrease ship's mass.

THE "GRAVITY SCREEN" fallacy is dealt with in Dr. Macklin's "The Tie-Breakers" (Science *Fiction Quarterly*, August 1957); and Capt. Bishop's version derives from H. G. Wells' notorious "Cavorite"—which brought snorts of indignation from Jules Verne, who considered it preposterous and a degradation of the true "scientific romance". Yet antigravity—by means of substances opaque to gravity, or "force-fields" which neutralized gravity—continued to engage science fiction writers for several years more. Up to the end of 1929, authors tried to think of plausible-sounding methods; then with the original *Astounding Stories of Super Science,* explanations went by the board. One had to take care in operating the screens—musn't have too much gravity *here* or too little *there,* you know—but why louse up a story with textbook explanations? Anybody knows what a gravity-screen is, anyway; it's a screen that shuts off gravity!

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(Meanwhile, deep in the red spot of Jupiter...)

The peril of meteors in space was a subject that came up frequently, and still can be found. Some authors depicted the Earth as recipient of an unending rain of meteors of all sizes; given that, they had to dream up some fantastic device to get space ships out into space without becoming sieves in the process. It seems to be generally agreed that a certain amount of danger from meteors does exist in fact, but exactly how much can't be ascertained yet. Or exactly what can be done about it.

CAPT. BISHOP was ahead of his time with space ship orbit calculations by computing machines. Between 1927 and the war, fictional orbits were generally calculated on a couple of tableclothsful of pencilled equations and charts. The matter of unexpected disturbances—a ship's being thrown off course by unforeseen (usually, but not always, temporary) elements—became a stock situation. Some of the imaginary disturbances are ridiculous; more often the situation is implausible because the characters were too stupid, or the fuel and propulsion element isn't believable even without the mishap. Obviously, we still don't know what way transpire in space-travel due to unforeseen disturbances, because if we knew something about them, they wouldn't be unforeseen. There are grounds, I think, for suspecting that we may be in for none-too-delightful surprises when (and if) the first space-voyagers get out between Earth and Moon or beyond.

(Let me say now that I'm not taking up with Dr. T. O'Conor Sloane's position that we'll *never* be able to go to the Moon—or beyond. We may indeed be on the verge of so doing—but until it actually happens, it's well to bear in mind that there are still a number of "ifs" in the matter and some of them may not be known yet.)

THE IDEA that the head of a comet is a "fiery mass" capable of attracting a space ship and consuming it died a hard death in science fiction. (So did the idea that the Earth's plunging into the tail of a comet would wreak horrible havoc.) Miscalculation of orbits or fuel supplies, or proper mass-weight ratios, may play a part on headlines should space flight come into being. No matter how marvelous the computer, human beings will still operate it, and humans are known to be fallible. Thus tales of disaster in space, due to somebody's blunder, will be legitimate for a long time to come. The incident of sacrific-

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ing a passenger, or a member of the crew, to eliminate mass isn't a dead letter, either.

As a story, "On the Martian Way" can be described as quaint; still, it ought to have appeared long before now in some anthology showing the development of Science fiction themes and devices. The number of stories whose ancestry can be traced back to this 5,000 word short tale in the February 1927 issue of *Amazing Stories*, and a thorough survey of how each germinal element has been proliferated, would make an amazing story in itself.

Next time, we'll go into other such "firsts" from 1927 and see where they led; but I doubt that the rest put together will equal Capt. Bishop's first and only effort in the field.

RAWL

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GENIUS LOCI ..... *Thomas N. Scortia*

Hardly anything in the New Glendale colony seemed to make sense to investigator Alfred Cadis, even though he'd been warned that he'd find it odd. Not only was it open season on bachelors here, all the time, but there was a matter of a plant blight that affected human beings, and things freezing in temperatures much too high!

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TALE OF THE PIONEER

by Issac Asimov

With a low bow in the direction of Sir William Gilbert's noble shade

I have a tale to tell, O!
(Tell me your tale, O!)
It will tell of a face
That is turned up to Space
That finds our old Earth a jail, O!
It's the tale of a pioneer, born too soon,
Who asked of life but a single boon:
To board a ship that would reach the Moon,
Or, perhaps, better still, reach a planet.
Can it, can it
Reach out a bit for a planet?
Is there a ship that would reach the Moon
Or, perhaps, better still, reach a planet?

I have a tale to tell, O!
(Tell me your tale, O!)
It will tell of a kind
Of unusual mind
With brilliance that will not fail, O!
It's the tale of a scientist, deep in thought,
Who found a way into space and brought
A new hope to the pioneer born too soon,
Who asked of life but a single boon:
To board a ship that would reach the Moon,
Or perhaps, better still, reach a planet.

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Can it, can it
Reach out a bit for a planet?
Is there a ship that would reach the Moon,
Or perhaps, better still, reach a planet?

I have a tale to tell, O!
(Tell me your tale, O!)
It will tell of the bang
And the steely clang
And of building a starward trail, O!
It's the tale of an engineer's shrewd design
In metal and force that will divine
The mind of a scientist, deep in thought,
Who found a way into space and brought
A new hope to the pioneer born too soon
Who asked of life but a single boon:
To board a ship that would reach the Moon,
Or perhaps, better still, reach a planet.
Can it, can it
Reach out a bit for a planet?
Is there a ship that would reach the Moon,
Or perhaps, better still, reach a planet?

I have a tale to tell, O!
(Tell me your tale, O!)
It will tell of a man
Who's the peak of the plan,
Steel-willed though his body's frail, O!
It's the tale of an astronaut and the dark,
Who carries man's life and hope and spark
In the shell of an engineer's shrewd design
In metal and force that did divine
The mind of a scientist, deep in thought,
Who found a way into space and brought
A new joy to the pioneer one bright noon,
Who received of life his one great boon
And boarded a ship that did reach the Moon
And what's more, later on, reached a planet.
Can it, can it
Reach out a bit for a planet?
It was a ship that had reached the Moon
And what's more, later on, reached a planet.

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A journalist in space may not be a very happy man . . .

. . . and a half-dozen of the other . . .

by A. Bertram Chandler

THE LONG voyage was almost over.

Of the ten men in the rocket, Hemmings was most relieved. Eight months was too long, had been too long. Eight months of free fall, eight months without women, without liquor, without tobacco, with only tasteless, unsatisfying food concentrates to eat. Eight months too, without news—or, at least, without news of the sort that would appeal to his readers.

At first, with the memory of the gentle blasting off from the Space Station still fresh in his mind, with the tiny, man-made world of the Mars Rocket still novel and interesting, Hemmings had sent daily reports to his editor. But his interest had soon flagged.

In this small, artificial

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planetoid there was nothing newsworthy—no dirt, no scandal, no violence. The huge circulation of *The Looking Glass*, Hemmings well knew, demanded just these items. Sunday, in millions of respectable homes, was not Sunday unless lust and murder—described in detail by Hemmings and his fellows—were introduced, by the medium of the printed page, into the prim parlours and the two neat bedrooms. Lust and murder... A blow-by-blow account of the long, leisurely chess match between Boyle, the Astronomer-Captain, and Grimshaw, the Physicist, was no substitute.

BOYLE, IN the Control Room, swivelled in his chair to talk to the Pilot.

"I suppose," he said doubtfully, "that we'd better have that unspeakable clot, Hemmings, up here for the landing."

"As you say, Skipper," replied Weldon, without enthusiasm.

"I wish we didn't have to. He'll... jinx things."

"Superstitious?" Weldon's brows arched high over his faded blue eyes.

"No... It's just that I don't like him. When I think of all the people who could have been sent..."

"You'd've preferred the Chess Correspondent of *The Observer... Or The Times.*"

"Frankly, yes. Still—it's the taxpayers who're footing the bill for this expedition. And with room for only one journalist—it's no more than fair, I suppose, that he comes from the rag with the highest circulation figures."

"Not fair on us," said the Pilot. "The man's done nothing but gripe ever since we shoved off. He wants a drink. He wants a smoke. He wants a dirty big steak with onions and French fries. D'ya know what he was saying to me a coupla days ago? That we shoulda had a blonde along. Then by this time he'd've had some nice, juicy scandal—to say nothing of a murder or two—for his paper."

"He's damned lucky that there hasn't been a murder," growled Bales. "Oh, well, he's here to be used. Better let him earn some of the fabulous salary that he's being paid."

HEMMINGS, when the call came through on the intercom, was engaged in an argument with Trent, the Biologist, and Grimshaw.

"You're going to be a very disappointed young man," said Trent. "No beautiful, oviparous princesses prancing around

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on a state of nature. No *bems*, even. No muck at all for you to stick your sharp little nose into. Just lichens—or something as near to lichens as makes no difference . . ."

"Just imagine the headlines," chortled Grimshaw. "*Love Life Of The Martian Lichens*. By Our Special Correspondent."

"But . . . Lichens . . ." muttered Hemmings.

"They spend their time lichen each other," said Grimshaw, reluctant to abandon his joke.

"But the canals," protested Hemmings.

"There just aren't any canals," Trent told him in a superior voice. "Sorry, old boy, but that's the way it is. Just an optical illusion."

"*With Knife And Fork Down The Alimentary Canal!*" shouted Grimshaw. "By Our Special Correspondent."

"Shut *up!*" flared Hemmings. "All right, all right. How do you clever bastards know so much? Nobody's been to Mars—yet. I suppose you remember the flap there was about the Moonflowers—after the scientists had been telling us for years that there was no life on the Moon? Or have you, oh so conveniently, forgotten?"

"Our instruments tell us what conditions are like on Mars," said Grimshaw, stuffily.

"Do they? *Do they?* Tell me—has anybody at the Lunar Observatory ever thought of pointing his fancy gadgets at the Earth? What sort of story would they tell us, I wonder? That Earth could not support life as we know it?"

"Don't be silly," snapped Grimshaw.

"I'm not being silly. Just answer my question."

The intercom speaker crackled.

"Mr. Hemmings," came the voice of Captain Boyle, "report to Control immediately."

"And they ask *him* to watch the landing," Trent complained bitterly to Grimshaw before the little journalist was out of earshot.

HEMMINGS' reception in the Control Room was far from cordial. Weldon grunted a greeting, his eyes intent on his instruments. Hales, saying nothing, waved a hand towards the one vacant chair.

Hemmings shrugged his narrow shoulders, let himself sink into the thick padding of the seat. He was not sorry to sit down. The gravity—a resultant of the rocket's deceleration—was tiring after the months of free fall, even though it was only a fraction

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of Earth's pull. He wished that he had a cigaret. He stared through the ports, looked without much interest at the red-orange desert down to which they were falling. He lifted his camera on its sling, snapped a quick picture of Weldon hunched over his controls.

Boyle glared at him. "Put that thing down, Mr. Hemmings."

"But, sir, this is a historic moment."

"It'll be even more historic if you put Weldon off his stroke and crash us. Trouble is—you won't be around to write it up for your yellow rag."

"Talking of writing up, sir—how long will it be before I can get Mr. Tallent to send off my report of the landing?"

"We've to land first. Then it'll take all of twelve hours to get all the scientific data off."

Yes, thought Hemmings. *You'll make it take all of twelve hours. You... You stuffed shirt!*

There was silence for a while, broken only by the muted, screaming roar of the drive, by the thinner screaming of the tenuous atmosphere through which they were dropping. The journalist stared through the nearest port, hating the Captain and the Pilot, hating the ship, hating the barren world, utterly devoid of human interest, beneath them, hating himself for being such a fool as to have come on this crazy, pointless expedition.

Suddenly he stiffened. "Sir! Captain Boyle! Would that be a canal? And a city?"

"Rubbish," said Boyle. Hardly bothering to follow Hemmings' pointing finger with his gaze. "Rubbish. A remarkably straight rift. A strange rock formation."

"There's water shining there."

"I believe the little bustard's right, Skipper," said Weldon, trying hard to keep the excitement out of his voice. "That's water, sure enough."

"VERY WELL, then," ordered Boyle. "Set us down by the...the..." He finally spat out the word as though it had an evil taste, "by the *canal.*"

"Near the city!" squeaked Hemmings.

"Near the rock formation," corrected Boyle, coldly.

Weldon at his controls, was sweating profusely. He turned a pale, strained face to his Captain.

"I've had to switch over to manual," he said. "We had her set for typical Martian conditions—but she won't handle.

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She's not designed to land in atmosphere this thick."

"*Thick?*" barked Boyle.

"Yeah. Thick. Damn' near Earth normal, I'd say by the feel of her."

"But that's impossible. We..."

"Leave me alone!" yelled the Pilot. "Let me do the job, my way—or we'll not get down in one piece."

The Captain, who had risen from his chair to peer over Weldon's shoulder, sat down hurriedly. Hemmings, remembering his argument with Trent and Grimshaw, permitted himself the luxury of a grin—a grin which faded as the rocket yawed violently. He wondered what sort of obituary the boys back home would give him.

THROUGH the port, in rapid succession he saw flashes of desert, of the dark, straight line that was the canal, of cloudless, dark blue sky. Then there was desert again, red sand and yellow sand and brown, jagged rocks, and it was too close and coming up far too fast. Aft, the Drive bellowed, shaking the ship with a terrifying broken rhythm. Somebody was screaming—looking back on it all afterwards he realized that it must have been himself. He heard Weldon say, in tones of deep disgust, "Hell! That's mucked it!"

And then the crash came.

"I *WAS The First Man On Mars,*" the voice was saying. "By Our Special Correspondent." It was his own voice. He heard somebody else laughing unkindly, *at* him, and opened his eyes with a jerk. He had been brought down, he realized, into the rocket's general room, was lying in an untidy huddle on the curved surface of the inner shell. The ship, he saw after a few moments' confusion, was on its side.

"We were lucky," Boyle was saying. "How's Trent, Doc?"

Paynton, the expedition's Medico, replied. "Not so good, Captain. A nasty compound fracture. And that bang on his head's not helping any."

"Any danger?"

"No. He'll pull through, all right. Just have to be watched for a while, that's all."

"H'm. Well, Taylor, what's your report?"

"We'll not need helmets, sir," said the Chemist. "Just warm clothing. Temperature's ten degrees Centigrade. Air pressure and oxygen content almost Earth normal."

"No bugs?" His face clouded. "That's Trent's pigeon. Could *you* run a test, Doc?"

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"I could—but I'd not guarantee results."

"All right, then. Full protective armour, everybody. A pity—but I'm taking no risks. You'll be staying with Trent, Doctor. Put out a call on our suit frequency if you want us back in a hurry."

"I'll stay with you," volunteered Hemmings. He thought, *It's a story of sorts. Fight For Life In Wrecked Mars Rocket.*

"You'll come with us, Hemmings," ordered the Captain. "We may be needing your camera."

OUTSIDE, Hemmings knew why. The official photographs had to be taken—Boyle, surrounded by his gallant crew, standing beside their broken ship in attitudes absurdly reminiscent of big game hunters with some hapless pachyderm unfortunate enough to get in the sights of their rifles. The reflection of the light from the faceplates of the helmets, Hemmings hoped, would make it impossible for anybody to identify the wearers. Then there was the planting of the flag—of which ceremony Hemmings was also the official photographer—and then, at last, the eight spacemen walked, slowly and carefully in the light gravity—to the canal.

I was right, thought the journalist. *It's artifical. Look at that stone parapet. And those trees—if they are trees—spaced at neat, regular intervals... Which way is the city? Which way is Captain Know-All Boyle's strange rock formation?*

The city was all of ten miles distant. Its buildings blended with the landscape, were red and orange and brown, lifting high yet without ostentation, curves and straight lines and angles all seeming to have grown rather than to have been built.

"So there *was* intelligent life here," whispered Boyle, his voice barely audible in the helmet phones of the others. "So there were canal builders..."

Hanging over the towers of the city, suddenly, was a ship. It gleamed brightly in the rays of the sun, its apparent size rapidly increasing.

"Hemmings, quick! Your camera!" shouted Boyle.

THE JOURNALIST had not needed to be told. Sighting with practised ease he pointed the whirring machine at the approaching aircraft, thinking in headlines—*Mystery Of The Flying Saucers Solved By Our Special Correspondent!*

"We should have brought

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weapons," Boyle was saying.

Thirty feet from the men, the saucer grounded. It was big, all of a hundred feet in diameter. It was of lenticulate construction, with a maximum thickness of fifteen feet. The metal of its hull shone with a strange, iridescent lustre.

A door opened at its rim, plates sliding up and to one side, a ramp inched down to the sand. A great glee suffused Hemmings' being—*this* was what he had come for. The six beings stepping slowly and deliberately from the machine were human in shape, and so far as he could see, were naked. His camera whirred. He thought happily—*The Nudists Of Mars,* By Our Special Correspondent. Then, as the Martians approached, his face fell. Without exception, well-formed as their bodies were, each one was sexless as an egg.

THE LEADING Martian lifted an instrument to his lips. His voice—pleasant, well modulated, with the barest touch of accent—sounded through the helmet phones of the Earthman. "Welcome," he said, "to our planet."

A shift of vowels, thought Hemmings. *Well—there's plenty of that back home. Brooklyn. Poils come from ersters. But how . . .?*

"For many years we have observed you," said the Martian. "We have listened to your broadcasts, learned your languages. We know that you have seen our ships, our flying saucers, and that you have decided, long since, that they have been the product either of optical illusion or of imagination.

"But I am failing in my duties as host. Our air, I assure you, is breathable."

"Micro-organisms?" asked Boyle.

"No harmful ones, I assure you . . ."

"Hemmings, you *fool!* Keep that helmet on!"

"Too late, Captain."

The journalist stood bareheaded, breathing the fresh air in great gulps. He saw that others of the party had followed his example. Boyle himself, although he was the last to do so, removed his own helmet.

"You will come with us to the city," said the Martian.

"There is an injured man aboard the rocket," said Boyle.

"We will send our doctors to assist yours. But come."

"All right," said Boyle. He talked into his own helmet phone, appraising the ship's Doctor of the situation. He motioned his men towards the flying saucer. One by one they entered the shining ma-

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chine—chemist, physicist, Communications Expert, Engineer, Archaeologist, Rocket Pilot, Journalist, and last of all, Boyle, the Astronomer-Captain. *All,* thought Hemmings, *experts in their fields. All but me.*

IT WAS surprisingly roomy inside the saucer. There was a deep, comfortable settee, following the curvature of the shell. In the centre of the machine was a sphere of some transparent material, inside which sat the pilot. His long fingers—*his?* wondered Hemmings, *his—or its* flickered over a bank of controls. With a barely perceptible motion the saucer rose, tilting slightly as it flew. Through big ports in its bottom the Earthmen could see the canal, the stunted, olive green vegetation, the red and orange and brown desert. Then there were streets and buildings and, at last, a wide square whose paved surface rose rapidly to meet them. The saucer grounded as silently as it had taken off, as silently as it had flown.

The door opened, the ramp slid out, grated slightly on the flagstones. Preceded by the Martians the Earthmen stepped out into the square, looked around them at the towering buildings, at the crowds of nude, apparently sexless natives who stared back at them. There were children among them, if size were any criterion, children and adolescents.

"Come," said the Martian who had first greeted them. "The Grand Council of Scientists awaits you."

IT HAD been decided Hemmings, one of the most boring afternoons of his journalistic career. The Martian scientists were old and stodgy, in spite of the hairlessness of their heads and faces contriving to convey the impression of long grey beards. It was as boring as Boyle's chess games had been. It had been, in fact, remarkably like a chess game, expert pitted against expert, specialist against specialist, each avid for the other's knowledge but neither anxious to divulge too much of what he himself knew.

The Martian's acquaintanceship with Terran affairs was —patchy. Through their monitoring of Earthly broadcasts they had learned a considerable amount, but there were surprising gaps in their knowledge. There was, too, considerable distortion.

"We have," explained Boyle, "a class of person whose function it is to gather and to disseminate news. Unluckly these journalists, as we call them,

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are apt to place sensation before accuracy..."

"We left it to *you*," said Hemmings, "to tell the world that Mars had no intelligent life."

The astronomer ignored him, was soon deep in a discussion concerning the trans-Plutonian planet which, it was divulged, had been visited once by a Martian ship.

This, thought Hemmings, *is news, I suppose.* He made a few dejected squiggles in his notebook.

WELDON, sitting next to Hemmings on the long settee, fidgetted. He said, "I've had a basinful of this. Astronomy. Physics, Chemistry, Social Structure—all I want is a chance to pilot one of their flying saucers. Don't suppose you've got much joy out of it, have you?"

"No," said Hemmings.

"And this damned accent of theirs. It annoys me. Worse than Brooklyn." He contrived to squeak, in a falsetto whisper, "Me lettle pit hin lays penk iggs..."

Hemmings giggled, then noticed that two of the Martians were looking curiously in his direction. He decided to change the subject, stared at the device on the opposite wall. "Wonder if that thing's a clock... That horizontal bar has moved way down the scale since we've been here."

"Funny that they should have a twenty four day same as us," said the Pilot. "But theirs is logical. Twelve toes, twelve fingers..."

"Never mind the days," said Hemmings. "How do they spend their nights?"

The two men were suddenly aware of the silence. They looked up, saw that Boyle was glaring at them, that the other Earth scientists were looking at them disapprovingly, that the Martians were regarding them with what may have been a flicker of sympathy.

"I would suggest," said the Captain icily, "that you gentlemen defer your private conference to some later date. Perhaps," and his voice dripped sarcasm, "our Mr. Hemmings has a question that *he* would like to ask our host."

HEMMINGS got to his feet. "Perhaps I have!" he shouted.

He strode to the most grave, the most senior, by his appearance, of the Martians. He stood with his notebook in his hand, his pencil ready. He was furious—with Boyle, with himself, with these absurdly neuter otherworldlings.

"Tell me," he demanded, speaking loudly and clearly.

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"tell me—what do you people do about sex?"

He heard Boyle gasp, sensed the embarrassment that he had caused the Martians. The one whom he had questioned flushed and looked away from the journalist, stared at the wall.

"You must think that we are very poor hosts," said the scientist at last, in his almost faultless, faintly accented English. His face, as he turned to Hemmings, seemed troubled.

"And you can tell that to your lettle, pit, penk hin..." whispered Weldon audibly.

"Weldon!" snapped Boyle..

"You must think that we are very poor hosts," said the Martian again, glancing at the wall as he spoke.

"Well, what *do* you do about sex?"

"That," said the native, "is when we usually have supper."

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Special Article

WANTED: A DEFINITION FOR SCIENCE FICTION

by Bob Olsen

In the sciences, definitions are exact and necessary. In the arts, definition in relation to the nature of the art are necessarily inexact. They are more in the nature of directive than repertorial statements: they try to explain what an art should be and to convince the reader that whatever does not conform to the definition cannot be recognized as an example of the art-form under discussion.

This sounds like a hopeless task, but it isn't necessarily so. Such definitions, where accepted by writers of particular type of fiction, for example, can result in an understanding of the art and an elevation of its standards. Perfection is impossible as an achievement; but the effort toward it isn't wasted, when it results in improvement, regardless of how far the improvement may be from the stated goal.

SINCE I have been a reader of science fiction for over six decades, and since more than a score of my stories were published in the world's first science fiction magazine about a quarter of a century ago, I used to think I knew what science fiction is. Recently, however, after eval-

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Here's a discussion of a much-debated question by one of the early "name" authors of the old *Amazing Stories*. Oldtimers, who were reading science fiction in 1927, will remember that the late Bob Olsen was one of the first to make a fictional exploration of the so-called 4th Dimension.

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uating radio, television, motion picture and latter-day magazine stories which claim to be science fiction, I began to wonder if I really know as much about the subject as I thought I did. In order to set myself straight—approximately three decades after I wrote my first science fiction story—I undertook to find an authoritative answer to the question: "What is science fiction?"

After several days of research, I was astonished to learn that nobody—and I do mean *Nobody* (as Gimbel or Macy might have said)—seems to know what science fiction is. I have several good dictionaries, including the latest *"American College Dictionary"* (Random House) which my son's English professor recommended; I also have four encyclopedias, including the latest revised edition of the *"Columbia Encyclopedia,"* and Benet's four-volume *"Reader's Encyclopedia."* None of these contains a definition of science fiction. So I went to the Lawndale branch of the Los Angeles County Public Library which, though small, is well equipped with reference books—such as the latest edition of *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, Collier's Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedia Americana.*

Believe it or not, all these reference books ignore completely the existence of science fiction and the need for defining it. Under similar circumstances, a normal person would probably have given up and concluded, as the hillbilly did when he saw a kangaroo: "There ain't no sech animule." However, I happen to be abnormally persistent. (My wife calls it "Norse stubbornness.") I figured that there *must* be some authoritative definition of a phenomenon which is becoming familiar to nearly everyone between the ages of 3 and 103. Surely, somebody in authority knows what science fiction really is!

Our local librarian is an accommodating lady, so I stated my problem to her and asked for help. She sent a "Mayday" message to the well-stocked, well-staffed Los Angeles County Central Public Library, whose librarians delight in helping those who hunger for knowledge. When they sent me a report about two weeks later, they confessed with astonishment that they also were stumped. No lexicographer or encyclopedist seems to have taken the trouble to define a subject which has been on all tongues, and has been extensively publicized by newspapers, magazines, comic books, radio, television, motion pictures and what-have-you ever since Orson Welles' broadcast

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of his version of H. G. Wells' "War Of The Worlds," in October, 1938—a portrayal so convincing that thousands of radio listeners behaved childishly.

ALTHOUGH the librarians were not able to unearth an *authoritative* definition of science fiction, they sent me several books which attempt to explain the nature, scope, purpose, etc., etc. of science fiction. I was already familiar with most of these books, but since I did not have all of them in my library, I was glad to get them so I could give myself a refresher course in a subject concerning which I apparently was somewhat ignorant—or at least out-of-date. Before doing that, however, I played my trump card which I had been holding in reserve—my ace in the hole, if you will pardon my metaphoric mixing of card games. I telephoned to none other than Mr. Science Fiction himself—in person. I reasoned that if a definition of science fiction exists anywhere in the solar system, it must be in the most nearly complete selection of science fiction in the world—which, as nearly every science fiction fan knows, is owned by the one and only Forrest J. Ackerman. It was inevitable that "4e", as his friends call him, did not disappoint me. He said, "Bob, if my arm was two feet longer I could reach out and get a book containing a definition of science fiction. Hold the line a sec." At the end of the sec. he dictated the following information: *"Avon Webster English Dictionary and Pocket Library of Encyclopedic Information,* Published May, 1952, Page 342: *sci-ence-fiction:* fantastic stories based on science."

I laughed and said, "That's like defining morality as 'wrong based on right.' Since science is essentially rational, and deals with fact, while fantasy is irrational, and deals with unrealities, the terms *science* and *fantasy* are mutually contradictory." Ackerman agreed that the Avon definition is unsatisfactory, but stated that it is the only one he knows about. So, in the hope of uncovering pay dirt, I dug into the books which the County Library had sent me. I found several definitions, to be sure; but most of them were even less accurate and more fanciful than the one in the lexicon with the extravagant title.

THAT LED to a realization that an illegitimate, incompatible, and unholy alliance seems to exist between *Science* and *Fantasy*—at least in the

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minds of some readers, writers and editors. This is exemplified by the titles of some of the magazines in the "Science Fiction" category. Of the 58 publications issued between 1926 and 1950, which Donald Day listed in his *"Index to Science Fiction"* twelve included the words "Fantasy" or "Fantastic" in their titles. Two others *Miracle Stories* and *Uncanny Stories* had similar connotations—which means that 26% of these magazines which were classified as science fiction actually were labeled "Fantasy." The same mixture —or rather emulsion, since oil and water do not mix—of science and fantasy seems to be prevalent also in science fiction fandom. The oldest science fiction fan club in the world is called the "Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society," and James Taurasi's publication, advertised as the "World's Oldest Science-Fiction Newspaper," carries the name *Fantasy Times* on its masthead.

Since I had a scientific education, and taught mathematics, physics and chemistry for a decade after I obtained my Ph. D. and M. A. degrees from Brown University, I have always found it hard to understand why *science* should ever be coupled with *fantasy,* which is the direct antithesis of science. Let anyone who doubts this take a look at the following definitions which are from the *American College Dictionary:* "SCIENCE: 1. A branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of natural laws. Example. *the mathematical sciences.* 2. Systematic knowledge of the physical and material world. Knowledge gained through systematic study.

"FANTASY: 1. Imagination, especially when unrestrained. 2. The forming of grotesque mental images. 3. (Psychology) a daydream. 4. Hallucination. 5. Supposition based on no solid foundation."

THIS CONFUSION between the two mutually contradictory categories seems to exist, not only in the minds of some publishers and some readers, but also in the ideas which some script-writers and producers have on the subject. It is obvious that many of the so-called "science fiction" movies, TV shows, and radio broadcasts are pure fantasy and have no scientific basis whatever. That some authors of magazine stories are similarly confused is revealed by one of the books which the County Library sent to me, namely the *"Science Fiction Handbook,"* by L. Sprague de Camp, who

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is one of the most popular of the latter-day contributors to so-called "Science Fiction" magazines. De Camp devotes several pages of his book to discussing various definitions of science fiction. It is apparent that he himself regards *science fiction* and *fantasy* as synonymous. At any rate, he groups them together in a category which he calls "Imaginative Fiction" as distinguished from "Realistic Fiction." In support of this, he quotes Fletcher Pratt, (who collaborated with de Camp in writing "The Better M o u s e t r a p," which was published in the December 1950, issue of *Magazine Of Fantasy and Science Fiction*). Pratt defined *Imaginative or Fantastic Fiction* thus: "A story that could not have h a p p e n e d, contrasted with *Realistic Fiction* that could happen, even if it did not. This puts all stories of the future in the category of imaginative fiction, as they could not have happened."

Apparently de Camp agrees with Pratt. He sums up his discussion of the definitions of science fiction thus: *"In the fiction of the modern Western World there is a group of stories that could not have happened, based on assumptions contrary to everyday experience, often highly fanciful and often laid in settings remote in time and space. These stories we have decided to call by the general term 'Imaginative Fiction.'"*

Restricting the term "imaginative fiction" to narratives which are impossible is about as fantastic, absurd and unauthentic as some so-called "science fiction." Is not all fiction imaginative? Let's see what the lexicographers say:

"FICTION: the branch of literature comprising works of imaginative narration."

Why then s h o u l d "we" (meaning Messrs de Camp and Pratt), decide to call one kind of f i c t i o n imaginative and another kind realistic?

Incidentally, although I do not agree with L. Sprague de Camp's definition of science fiction, I regard him as a talented writer of science fiction as well as fantasy. He did an especially good job in compiling his *"Science Fiction Handbook,"* which I heartily recommend to anyone interested in fantasy and/or science fiction.

AS TO THE distinction between science fiction and fantasy, magazine editor John W. Campbell, Jr., who contributed authentic science fiction to early issues of Gernsback's *Amazing Stories*, explained it thus: "It is *science fiction* if the writer thinks it could hap-

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pen, *fantasy* if he thinks it could not." I agree that the cardinal difference between science fiction and fantasy is that the former should be plausible and the latter impossible; but I do not think it is enough for the author alone to believe his story could happen. He must write it so plausibly and convincingly that every reader will share his belief. I do not see how an author can possibly do that unless he has a thorough grounding in mathematics and science to begin with, any more than a draftsman can design an airplane wing without knowing anything about aeronautics. This, of course, is just one man's opinion, which probably will be challenged by many readers, editors and writers.

In his "Handbook," L. Sprague de Camp says: *"I am often asked, 'Must one have a scientific education to write science fiction?' The answer is the same as for the question whether one has to be crazy: 'No, but it helps.'"* De Camp adds that some authors of science fiction did have scientific educations, but that *"others picked up what science they needed by reading, observation and conversation."* That apparently accounts for many of the numerous bobbles and blunders which repeatedly crop up in some of the latter-day magazines labelled "Science Fiction."

Publishing absurd assumptions in pseudepigriphal, or "falsely named" stories, where such nonsense masquerades as "science," can do a lot of harm. Such fakery can deceive young, or mentally-immature readers into believing errors which will be hard to unlearn if they ever study orthodox science. That probably was what M.I.T. Professor Norbert Weiner, the founder of cybernetics, had in mind when, in his recently published autobiography, *"I Am A Mathematician,"* he called science fiction "a pernicious article."

To anyone such as Professor Weiner, who does have a scientific education, it is apparent that the writers of some science fiction stories lack scientific knowledge and depended only on information, (or misinformation), which they "picked up by reading, observation and conversation." No science can be mastered without many hours of laboratory experimentation—or field work, or close observation of nature—under expert supervision. Clear understanding of exact sciences, such as physics, chemistry and astronomy, on which so many science fiction plots depend, cannot be obtained without thorough training in mathematics, which also requires

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competent instruction, and can hardly be "picked up."

IT IS WELL-KNOWN that the really great masters of science fiction did have scientific educations. Jules Verne—who originated science fiction, as the term is used today—was a science scholar, especially in the sciences of geography and oceanography. The father of English science fiction, H. G. Wells, whose career was strongly influenced by the great scientist, T. H. Huxley, taught science before he started to write science fiction. Olaf Stapledon, who is generally rated second to Wells in the science fiction field, was a lecturer at Liverpool University. Hugo Gernsback, the undisputed father of science fiction in the United States, and the founder of the world's first science fiction magazine, had a thorough scientific education in Germany before he came to America. It is significant that many of the predictions made in stories by Verne, Wells, Stapledon, Gernsback and the earlier, better-educated contributors to *Amazing Stories*—ideas which were regarded as fantastic when they were first published — became commonplace realities while their authors were still alive.

In his own writings and in his choice of material for *Amazing Stories* when he was editing it, Hugo Gernsback stressed the *educational* superiority of science fiction over ordinary literature. As de Camp expressed it, *"Gernsback has always accented the* science *part of science fiction rather than the* fiction, *holding these stories to be practical means of conveying scientific facts with slight sugar-coating of fiction, interesting young readers in scientific careers, and stimulating the minds of scientists and inventors. He objects to giving the name 'science fiction' to stories like Burroughs' Martian tales, wherein one badly worked out pseudo-scientific assumption is used merely as a peg on which to hang a picaresque adventure-romance."*

IT SEEMS apparent that Hugo Gernsback, in his appraisal of what constitutes science fiction and what it should accomplish, thought brain-to-brain with the greatest of all science fiction authors, Jules Verne. No one can read *"Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea," "Mysterious Island,"* or any of Verne's other science fiction stories, without learning a bit of science, besides being excitingly entertained. It must be remembered, however, that some of Verne's novels, such as *"Around The*

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World In Eighty Days" and *"Michael Strogoff"* cannot properly be classified as science fiction.

That many people became interested in scientific or engineering careers because they read stories by Verne, Wells, Gernsback, and other authors of real science fiction, when they were young, is a well-known fact. Furthermore, it would be difficult—perhaps impossible—to name a single modern invention which was not first conceived by a science fiction author. Not all inventors or scientists who have made important discoveries, which have benefitted mankind and advanced civilization, have been willing to admit their indebtedness to the authors who gave them the ideas on which to base their work, but some of them have been honest enough to do so.

The inventor of the submarine, Simon Lake, started his autobiography with this sentence: *"Jules Verne was the director general of my life."* Marconi, originator of wireless communication; Claude, who gave us neon lighting; La Cierva, inventor of the first practical helicopter; Piccard, balloonist and deep sea explorer; Admiral Byrd, who flew across both poles; and many others, gave credit to Verne for starting them thinking along scientific lines. It is unlikely that the authors who wrote real science fiction would have had so much influence on modern inventions and discoveries if they had not written their seemingly fantastic stories plausibly, as well as interestingly.

Regarding verisimilitude in science fiction, an interesting comment was made by Olaf Stapledon in his preface to *"Last And First Men"*.

"I have undertaken to invent a story which may seem a possible, or at least not wholly impossible, account of the future of man."

Aristotle expressed a somewhat similar thought when he said, *"Better a probable impossibility than an impossible probability."*

AMONG THE other definitions which de Camp quotes in his "Handbook" is this one, which he credits to Dr. Oscar Brauner: *"Science fiction deals with the sciences and their impact on man in a fictitious way."* While this is not as bad as the definitions which confuse science with fantasy, it is far from satisfactory because it includes literature to which the designation "science fiction" cannot correctly be applied. For instance, Sinclair Lewis's *"Arrowsmith"* deals with the science of bacte-

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riology and its impact on the life of a medical student, and on the lives of those whom his research work benefitted; but it certainly is not science fiction. Psychological novels and psychiatric yarns such as Henry James's *"The Egoist"* and Herman Wouk's *"The Caine Mutiny,"* deal with the science of psychology and its impact on human beings in a fictitious way, but no enlightened person would call them science fiction. Thousands of similar examples could be given to prove that Dr. Brauner's definition is inadequate.

A few times, during my frustrating search for an acceptable definition of science fiction, I ran into this one: *"Science Fiction: Any story printed in a science fiction magazine."* That is reminiscent of the hoary vaudeville gag: "If a cat had kittens in a stove oven would they be biscuits?" Surely no intelligent person believes that all stories published in so-called "Science Fiction" magazines actually are what they claim to be—any more than all the contents of so-called "comic books" are comic or all "true confessions" are true. And what about science fiction published in "slick" magazines, or in book form, or original science fiction plots of motion pictures, television programs and radio broadcasts? Must they be excluded from the category because they were not published in science fiction magazines?

Another misconception which seems to be prevalent is that any story becomes science fiction if its setting is in the remote future, or the remote past, or in a remote portion of interstellar space. It should not be necessary to point out that disguising the plot of a western, detective, adventure, or sex story by dolling up the hero in a space suit, arming him with a disintegrator instead of a gun, and sending him in a spaceship to a sun hundreds of light years away (where human beings could not possibly survive)—or shifting him backward or forward in time (which no author has ever been able to rationalize convincingly)—does not transform it into science fiction. Nevertheless, a large number of the stories which have been published in some science fiction magazines during the past few years contain no original scientific ideas whatever, and really are rehashed westerns, whodunits or sex tails (pardon me for intentionally misspelling that word) which could just as well have happened in America at the present time.

A SOMEWHAT similar criticism was directed against

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science fiction by Bernard de Voto, author of the most unique—and certainly the most startling—definition of science fiction I have encountered during the many years I have been studying the subject. In his "Easy Chair" column, published by *Harper's Magazine* in September, 1939—e l e v e n months after the "The War Of The Worlds" broadcast, de Voto announced that he had read a number of stories in current issues of so-called "science fiction magazines." (In 1939 there were no less than twelve science fiction magazines on the newsstands; some of them really were abhorrent.)

After summarizing the plots of several stories culled from these publications, Bernard de Voto commented as follows: *"This besotted nonsense is from a group of magazines known as science pulps. The science discussed is idiotic beyond any possibility of exaggeration; but the point is that, in this kind of fiction, the bending of light is like the sheriff of the horse opera fanning his gun or the heroine of the sex pulp removing her dress."* Then came de Voto's definition: *"It is easy to classify these exhibits as paranoid phantasies converted into fiction for the titillation of tired, dull minds."*

How well I remember de Voto's diatribe, and the ribbing which a certain has-been science fiction author had to take from his relatives and friends, right after it was published. At a Brown University Alumni banquet, one of my classmates, who reads *Harper's Magazine* regularly but loathes what he called "science fiction tripe," asked me if I had written any paranoid phantasies for the titillation of dull and weak minds lately. Fortunately, I had an alibi. My come-back was to quote from the variety routine of Weber and Fields, who were the Abbott and Costello of the "naughty-naughts." It is the stalest chestnut in the history of vaudeville, but it probably will be brand new to the younger generation of readers:

Weber: Didn't I seen you last Birthington's Washday in Peoria?

Fields: Couldn't be me. I neffer vas in Peoria.

Weber: I never was in Peoria neither. Musta bina coupla udder fellers.

Since no stories of mine were published during the year 1939, when I was a very sick man, de Voto could not have had me in mind when he wrote those flattering words. Musta bina coupla udder fellers.

INCIDENTALLY, if Bernard de Voto were alive today,

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and if he were to make a survey of the science fiction magazines which have been published during the past few years, he would find many "space horse operas," "space whodunits" and "space sex tales" which do not even take the trouble to bend the light rays.

By having the sheriff fan his gun while riding in a space ship instead of on a cayuse; or the heroine shed her bra on Venus; or the private eye trail the murderer by traveling forward, backward or sidewise in time, the author can relabel any of his old yarns "science fiction" and sell them over and over again. He may be so dumb about mathematics and science that he thinks the slide rule was invented to prevent baseball players from spiking each other; that Algebra was the wife of Euclid; and that a spectroscope is an instrument for examining specters—but that need not prevent him from calling himself a science fiction writer and from getting his stuff printed in various science fiction magazines.

It might even be said that the less he knows about science, and the more he knows about such subjects as vampires, werewolves, zombies and witchcraft, the better chance he has of selling his stories to some science fiction magazines.

Although my painstaking research failed to disclose a single satisfactory definition of science fiction, I did find one which came close. It was contributed by J. O. Bailey in his *"Pilgrims Through Space And Time:"*

"A piece of science fiction is a narrative of an imaginary invention or discovery in the natural sciences and consequent adventures and experiences. The invention must *be imaginary at the time the romance is written. The discovery may take place in the interior of the earth, on the moon, on Mars, within the atom, in the future, in the prehistoric past or in a dimension beyond the third. It may be a surgical, mathematical or chemical discovery. It* must *be a scientific discovery —something that the author at least rationalizes as possible to science."*

Bailey points out that this definition excludes novels that interpret character in the light of scientific fact, such as Huxley's *"Point Counter Point"*, and also "Utopias" and satires concerned solely with human nature, politics, economics, etc. It also excludes stories of occult and psychic manifestations.

Bailey adds: *"However, a science fiction story may attempt to anticipate new discov-*

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eries, and their impact on human society."

WHILE THIS is the best definition of science fiction I have been able to find, it still is unsatisfactory, for at least two reasons: In Bailey's list of sciences on which science fiction might be based, he omits three which, in my opinion, are most important of all: astronomy, biology and physics. Furthermore, in his summary of suitable settings for science fiction stories, he includes two which no writer has ever "rationalized as possible," as his last sentence demands. Since it has been proved that the temperature of the Earth increases at the rate of 30 degrees Centigrade per kilometer of depth, and reaches the temperature of molten rock, (1200 to 1800 degrees Centigrade) at a depth of only 50 kilometers, it obviously would be impossible for human beings to penetrate for more than a short distance into the interior of the Earth and certainly not to the center of the Earth, which several authors have used as the locale for their stories. Men could not live within an atom either.

Stories such as these, which depend on unscientific assumptions that cannot be rationalized, belong in the realm of fantasy rather than science fiction.

Besides being counterfeited by "p h a n t a s i e s," "horror tales," "stories of the supernatural," "space westerns," "space whodunits," "space sex confessions," etc., science fiction is also frequently confused with "escape literature," so-called, because it is designed to give second-hand thrills to readers who like to be transported to a dream world where they can escape from life's dull and unpleasant realities. I have nothing against escape literature, which undoubtedly helps many readers to forget that their own lives are lacking in interest, excitement or achievement. Nor would I think of criticising buyers of magazines and books who read only for entertainment. They certainly deserve more credit than the vast numbers of Americans who, according to recent surveys, never read any books at all. However, I do object emphatically to calling science fiction "escape literature." While good science fiction is as entertaining, as exciting, and as thrilling as any other kind of narrative, it differs from escape literature because, in addition to being interesting, it also is educational, prophetic and inventive.

HOW THEN should science fiction be defined? Apparently, since a thorough study has disclosed no satisfactory,

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authoritative definition, that question is still unanswered. Before attempting to compose a definition which is satisfactory, let us consider the attributes which distinguish valid science fiction, and which I believe make it superior to any other kind of literature. That, I realize, is a debatable assumption. Nevertheless, in spite of the blistering criticism which Bernard de Voto, Norbert Weiner, and many other eminent critics have directed at stories mislabelled "science fiction," I think it can be proved that genuine science fiction does have several unique superiorities.

It has previously been pointed out that practically all modern inventions were predicted, originated, and in many cases described convincingly, in stories which were regarded as fantastic when they were first published. In his *"Pilgrims Through Space and Time"*, J. O. Bailey put it this way: *"A complete list of the inventions and discoveries described in science fiction would sound like a list of headings in the files of the patent office... Science fiction more or less anticipates every important modern invention and many that have not appeared."*

It is also true that many of the Twentieth Century's great scientists, discoverers and inventors, who have done so much to promote the health, welfare and happiness of mankind, originally became interested in scientific careers through reading science fiction.

WHY HAS human progress been so strongly influenced by genuine science fiction? Examination of the science fiction stories of Jules Verne, who originated this type of imaginative writing; H. G. Wells, the father of English science fiction; Hugo Gernsback, the father of science fiction in America; and the other authors, whose works were published in the early issues of the world's first science fiction magazine, reveals that most of them, besides being entertaining, possessed five additional advantages.

To qualify as *genuine* science fiction, a story should be:

1. *Scientific:*
It should be accurate and consistent from a scientific point of view.
2. *Educational:*
Science fiction should teach *authentic* science, clearly explained and understandable to any literate reader.
3. *Original:*
The theme should be new, not just a rehash of a stock formula. Since genuine science

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fiction describes inventions which no one ever thought of before, it is one kind of fiction which really can be original.

4. *Plausible:*

Science fiction should be so plausible that it convinces the reader it actually could happen.

5. *Prophetic:*

Today's science fiction should anticipate the future, just as the best science fiction of the past anticipated practically all the inventions and discoveries which we enjoy now.

With these considerations in mind, I submit the following definition:

Science Fiction: A narrative about an imaginary invention, or discovery, which is possible in accordance with authentic, scientific knowledge and relates adventures and other happenings which might reasonably result from the use of the invention or discovery.

During World War I, Bruce Bairnsfather became famous for his cartoons depicting episodes in the lives of an English private named "Old Bill" and his buddies. They helped not only the British Tommies but also millions of other freedom-loving people to laugh off their wartime troubles and anxieties. The most famous of these cartoons showed two soldiers who had taken cover in a shallow shell-hole, with bombs bursting all around them. The first soldier said, "This is a 'ell of a 'ole." Old Bill remarked, "If yer knows of a better 'ole—go to it."

So—if you who are now reading this know of a better definition of science fiction—go to it. And please, oh please! Won't you let the rest of us in on it?

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THE CONVINCER

by David Gordon

How could Quinn persuade investigators that there was no trickery in his invention?

ROUND AND round and round whirled the little vanes on their axes, spinning merrily within their sealed glass globe.

Bedford Quinn touched the knobs on a control panel several feet away, as he watched the revolving vanes in intense concentration. And, as he worked, Dr. Lyman Kent watched with narrowed eyes, his face calmly speculative.

"It moves, all right," Kent said, interestedly. He rubbed the tip of his short, stubby nose with an equally short, stubby thumb. "I'll grant that it moves. Now would you mind explaining just *how* it moves?"

Quinn glanced at the short, stocky figure of the physicist, and then back at the whirling vanes. His palms felt sweaty, and he bit at his lower lip.

"As I said, Dr. Kent, all I have to do is decide that they'll move, and they move. I've got a hunch that the magnetic field surrounding the globe focusses the—uh—the mental vibrations, and I can make the thing rotate."

Stories of inventions are traditional in science fiction, and today the "psionic machine" is being played up. Well, let's assume that our protagonist has built a psionic machine which really does what it is supposed to do. What can he do with it then? How can he persuade scientists and businessmen that he really has something here — not just a trick?

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KENT TURNED his chubby face toward Quinn and looked at him from warm hazel eyes. His fist covered his mouth as he kept rubbing the tip of his nose. "I see. And that's how you explain the workings of a radiometer? Look, son; I've seen those things, you know. I think I saw my first one when I was in high school. I hate to disillusion you, but you really don't need all this electronic and optical gadgetry to surround that thing. All you need is a light source; an ordinary electric bulb will do it."

Bedford Quinn closed his eyes behind the rimless glasses and took a deep breath. "Dr. Kent, you know very well that an ordinary radiometer works by Newton's Third Law. The vanes in it have to be black on one side and silver on the other. The black side becomes warmer than the other; and the molecules of the rarified atmosphere within rebound from the hotter, black side faster than they do from the cooler, silver side, and—"

Dr. Kent waggled a hand in the air. "Please, young man; don't lecture me on elementary physics. I can see very well that the vanes of this particular radiometer are white on both sides. I am also well aware that there are various compounds which reflect visible light, but do not reflect infrared. Others reflect both. Even though both sides *look* alike, they don't necessarily have the same temperature."

"Then how do you explain *this?*" Quinn snapped. He took another deep breath.

The whirling vanes slowed, stopped, and began to spin in the opposite direction.

KENT MERELY looked tired. "Look, son; I was only naming *one* way it could be done. There are others. A rotating magnetic field—"

"There's no magnetic material in the vanes," Bedford said sharply.

"—or an electrical field," Kent continued. "I can think, right offhand, of a dozen ways. Now, if you'd just let me put instruments on your circuits, and make a few checks for various fields..." His voice trailed off with a sort of "I-know-you-won't-so-why-go-on" tone.

Bedford Quinn closed his eyes again. "I've told you, Doctor; the shape and the density of the fields are highly critical. Any instruments will—"

The elder man broke in. "—will cancel the effect," Kent finished mildly. "I under-

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stand perfectly, Mr. Quinn. And I don't suppose that *I* can do this, eh?"

"You can try if you want," Bedford said dispiritedly. "Just try—well, try to think of the vanes stopping. Well, not exactly *think*—I mean, get a —sort of get ahold of them, and—" He stopped abruptly, knowing there was no use going on.

Dr. Kent looked at the vanes for a long minute, scowling. Nothing happened. At last, he looked up at Bedford. "I know," he said sadly, "I understand why it didn't work. I've been told the same thing a hundred times. I don't believe it will work; I'm skeptical. So is every other scientist who is asked to investigate these gimmicks."

BEDFORD didn't say a thing, so Dr. Kent looked around the room, searching for the place where Quinn had hung his visitor's trenchcoat.

The workshop was untidy, unlike the rest of the neat, small, suburban house. It was cluttered with spare wires and tubes, tools, spots of solder, bits of glass, and the general array of what's usually found in an electronics workshop. But one bench was spotlessly clean; the Formica-topped bench on which the weird-looking apparatus sat, surrounded by its shield of copper mesh.

Kent spotted his coat draped over a chair. His hat was resting on the seat. He picked them up and then looked at Bedford Quinn once more.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Quinn; really, we're wasting my time and yours." He looked at the tall, lean, prematurely-balding young man and shook his head. "I fail to see why you people do it. Lately, there has been a popular rash of this sort of thing. ESP, psychokinesis, telepathy, and heaven knows what else, seem to be the things for people to try to fool scientists with. It's gotten to the point where a mathematician has to avoid using the Greek letter *psi* in his equations for fear someone will think he's working on parapsychological formulae.

"I can't blame anyone for desiring fame and fortune; that has become the ideal of our society But why they try to do it by attempting the impossible, or trying to convince someone that they have achieved the impossible, is beyond me.

"Every so often, someone comes up with a squared circle, or a trisected angle, or a perpetual motion machine. Sometimes they're trying to fool the savants; sometimes they're just fooling themselves.

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I don't know which class you're in, young man, but it's got to be one or the other."

AS KENT pulled on his trenchcoat, Quinn watched him silently, his long, bony fingers stretching and flexing at his sides. Finally, he said, in a somewhat strangled voice: "I had hoped that perhaps you might be able to think of a way to measure the effect, Doctor."

Kent buckled his trench coat over his slight paunch. "You seem to be very well educated in electronics, Mr. Quinn, and yet you say that no instrument whatsoever can be used. How do you know when the field is just right?"

"I—I *feel* it—sort of," said Bedford Quinn.

Kent shook his head. "I don't. Nor can I see X-rays or hear a sixty kilocycle note. I can only deduce their existence by instruments which transform their effects into something I can detect. Someone once said that ghosts can never be detected by science, because ghosts can only appear when there are no scientists around. Your machine seems to have the same aversion to instruments."

"If you'd just approach this with an open mind, Doctor..."

KENT SHOOK his head firmly. "You don't mean that, Mr. Quinn. You mean that I ought to believe it in the first place. A man with an open mind is one who is willing to be convinced by facts which are obvious to him. I have, I think, an open mind—but I see no facts. Don't point at that radiometer; I see it. I can also see light coming in through the window, but I don't believe it is caused by emanations from my eyes, because there are other theories which explain the facts better.

"Believe me, any time you can let me prove to my own satisfaction that no detectable, known force is spinning that thing, I'll concede that something unknown is doing it. I'll also concede that it might come from your mind. But until that time..." He spread his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Very well, Doctor." Bedford said stiffly, "I'll try to think of something. Thank you for coming; I'll take you to the door."

Bedford reached, shut off the apparatus; the two men left the cluttered laboratory and walked through the neatly-kept living room without saying a word. At the door, Kent turned, and said: "I mean that, Mr. Quinn; if you ever work out a way to run

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tests on your machine, let me know."

"Thanks, Doctor; I will." Quinn shook the older man's hand and closed the door after him. He stood there a moment, then walked deliberately over to the fireplace, picked up a china figurine and hurled it vehemently at the door, where it smashed loudly into fragments and scattered all over the floor.

THE LAST chip had barely touched the rug when a clatter of high heels fluttered down the stairway. "Honey! What is it?" called a feminine voice.

The girl standing at the foot of the stairs was by no means beautiful, but she was pleasant to look at. Her face was round and plump, as was her figure; her mouth had a tendency to smile all the time, and her eyes were clear and intelligent. The whole ensemble was topped off with a crown of flaming red hair.

She looked at the shattered figurine and then at her husband. "He didn't believe you, did he?"

Bedford shook his head. "No. He didn't. He wouldn't even listen, Doris."

Doris walked into the kitchen. "You mean he just walked out without listening to you?"

"Almost. He said I was a phony or a nut, one or the other. He wouldn't even try to think about the possibility that I might be neither."

Doris came out of the kitchen with a broom, a dustpan, and a freshly-opened can of beer. She handed the last item to her husband, then began using the other two industriously on the scattered fragments of china.

BEDFORD QUINN leaned against the fireplace, sipping his beer in silence. He was a lean, nervous individual, with dark, thinning hair and a pencil-line mustache. His thin lips were clamped tight in anger; his eyes looked out from behind rimless glasses and stared at nothing in particular.

"Something wrong, somewhere," Doris said, as she dumped the dustpan into a wastebasket. "He could see the thing spin, couldn't he? Why wouldn't he believe it? It seems to me that something like that would convince even the most skeptical."

"Not a man like that," Bedford said. "Actually, we're being very unkind to him. He's open minded enough, for one who doesn't believe in such things and doesn't want to. He won't believe it until I can prove to him that nothing else is doing it—in other words,

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what he actually wants is negative proof."

"Joe Thorne believed you," she pointed out. "And so did Mason Bruckner. And they're both pretty hardheaded individuals."

"Sure," said Bedford, "but that's different. Thorne and Bruckner both know me. They know I wouldn't deliberately try to fool them, and they know I'm not a nut. But they aren't Dr. Kent." He lifted his beer can to eye level and looked at the label. "Kent was right, you see, when he said that an open mind wasn't enough. He..."

"Is that what he said?" Doris interrupted. She sat down in the big, soft easy chair that faced the fireplace. Normally, Bedford claimed the exclusive right to that chair, but Doris was permitted to sit in it when he was lecturing.

"That's what he said," her husband continued. "And he was right. You've got to believe in something before it can convince you."

"WHAT ABOUT the people who watched Galileo drop weights off the Leaning Tower?"

"They believed in what they saw. They did not refute the evidence of their own senses. That has its drawbacks, of course; they also believed that prestidigitation was magic, if they didn't know the trick. They believed that the Earth was flat, and the sky was a round bowl, because they saw it that way.

"But a man who's been trained in modern science doesn't believe only in his own senses. He's willing to accept the existence of things which he can't see, sounds he can't hear, and force fields that he can't feel, because he can detect them with instruments.

"So, just as the medieval thinker attributed things he saw to the actions of demons or spirits, or to Divine Miracles, the modern thinker attributes them to known forces. And, just as the actions of God or Satan might be hidden from mortal sight, and indecipherable at the moment, so a revolving radiometer vane might be unexplainable at the moment; but there is no doubt that it will be explained in time."

He took another long draught of beer. "I drink, my dear, to the common man. The common man can believe both. He is educated enough to believe in what the scientists tell him, and superstitious enough to believe in the things they don't tell him.

"The only trouble is that he believes in the scientists when the scientists tell him what *not* to believe—unless

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he *doesn't* believe what the scientists told him to believe in the first place."

DORIS WAVED her hand in the air. "Stop, dear. When your rhetoric becomes incomprehensible, you're becoming overwrought. Besides, you're the last one in the world who should be ranting against scientists."

"I know, dear, but—"

At that moment, the phone rang. Bedford walked over and lifted the receiver. "Bedford Quinn speaking," he said.

"Mr. Quinn? This is Dr. Schuyler van Wyck. I represent a small group of men who are interested in psionic research in connection with electro-optical phenomena. I understand that you are working on something in that line."

"Who told you that?"

There was a pause at the other end of the line. Then: "I don't think our informant would mind if I told you. It was Mr. Mason Bruckner. If you don't want it known that you are working along these lines, we'll certainly co-operate. Many of our experimenters are, shall we say, keeping under cover because of the fear of public ridicule.

"But what we would like you to do is send us your name and address. Our purpose is to keep men like yourself in contact with others who are doing the same sort of work."

BEDFORD looked up at his wife and grinned wryly. "I see. And what are the dues?"

"The what?" The voice on the other end seemed surprised.

"The tariff," Bedford said. "The registration fee. Whatever you call it."

Again there was a short pause. "There is no charge, Mr. Quinn; we are merely acting as a clearing house. All you have to pay is postage. May we register you?"

"You already have my name and address, obviously," Bedford said. He looked at his long fingers, making a fist and relaxing it.

"Yes, we do," said the man who had identified himself as Dr. Van Wyck. "But we do not give out this information to our other correspondents without permission."

"I see. May I call you later?"

"Certainly," said the voice. The man gave a number and an address. "Call us any time, Mr. Quinn, and thank you for your time. If you don't mind, we'll send you some of our literature."

"Fine," Bedford said. "I'll call you later, Dr. Van Wyck."

He hung up.

"Who was it, dear?" Doris asked.

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BEDFORD grinned, twisting the misplaced eyebrow he called a mustache into an odd curve. "That chuckleheaded friend of mine, Mason Bruckner, gave my name to some mystic society for the preservation of crystal balls. Anybody who does any investigation of this sort is invariably adopted by everyone from the American Spiritualists Union, Local 69, to the International Society for Psychical Research. The trouble is that they are all about as selective in what they accept as a feline in heat."

He walked over to the wastebasket and dropped his beer can. "There's the whole trouble, you see. Anyone who believes in ESP is also assumed to believe in calling up the dead, haunted houses, and fire-breathing dragons. You're either a 'scientist', and believe in none of them, or a 'mystic' and believe in all of them. There is no middle road."

Doris looked at his hands. "Stop wiggling those fingers of yours! You look as though you wanted to strangle someone."

Bedford Quinn looked down at his hands. "Not *someone*, my dear," he said softly. "A whole lot of people."

IT WAS THREE days before Bedford Quinn came across the name of Dr. Schuyler van Wyck again, and the context was such that he recognized it as being familiar, but couldn't place it immediately. It was in a news article.

NOTED SCIENTIST SAYS NEW NEUTRINO DETECTOR WILL LOCATE ATOMIC REACTORS

New York (AP) Dr. Schuyler van Wyck, former AEC research head, announced today that a new method of detecting neutrinos, tiny, neutral particles given off during atomic reactions, will enable the U. S. Government to locate atomic reactors anywhere in the world. Neutrinos have heretofore been, for all practical purposes, indetectable.

Dr. Van Wyck refused to give details of the new detector, which, he said...

It was at that point that the name registered with Bedford Quinn. He sat bolt upright in his easy chair and said: "Yikes!"

Doris stuck her head out of the kitchen and said: "Burn yourself, dear?"

BEDFORD answered her with a sharp "No!", dropped the newspaper to the floor, and stood up. He lit a fresh cigaret off the butt of the old one; his eyebrows pulled

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together in a concentration scowl, his eyes focussed on nothing.

Doris stood in the doorway, a dish in one hand, a dishtowel in the other. She polished the dish mechanically and watched her husband.

"What's the matter, honey?"

"Van Wyck," he said, as if that explained everything. He strode over to his voluminous bookcase, pulled down a new copy of *Who's Who in Science*, and flipped to the V's. There it was: *VAN WYCK, Schuyler Peter; B.S., Physics, Texas Technological College; M.S., Physics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; M.S., Chemistry, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ph. D., Mathematical Physics, Columbia University.*

He pushed the book back into place, thought a minute, and walked over to his bound copies of *Scientific American*. He had to look through several before he found the copy that his memory had vaguely told him contained the article he was looking for. It was entitled: *"Extrasensory Perception: A Statistical Analysis,* by Schuyler van Wyck."

HE GLANCED through the article to confirm his recollection of it. It was a detailed analysis of Rhine's work, and it proved—as far as the author was concerned—that there was no basis for anyone believing in anything that had so little real evidence for its existence as ESP, PK, and related "so-called psionic abilities of the human mind."

Dr. Schuyler van Wyck, in other words, thought it was all bunk, pure and simple. At least, he had thought so a year ago, when he article was written. What had made him change his mind? Or had he, really?

There was only one way to find out. Bedford walked over to the phone, picked it up, and dialed the number he had been given.

"Dr. Van Wyck's residence," said a female voice at the other end.

"Is Dr. Van Wyck in?"

"Who is calling, please?"

Bedford identified himself, and within a few seconds, Van Wyck's voice came over the line.

"How are you, Mr. Quinn? Have you received our pamphlet?"

BEDFORD realized guiltily that the envelope had come the day before and he hadn't even bothered to open it. It was right there, on the desk. "Yes, but I'd like to ask you a few questions, if you don't mind, Doctor." He tried to stall for time while he opened

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the envelope that lay on the desk before him.

"Not at all, sir. Go right ahead."

Bedford pulled out the pamphlet and tried to skim through it as he talked. "The pamphlet really isn't too informative. And, frankly, it seems more intended for the mystic than the scientific thinker."

"It is," said Van Wyck. "We are trying to get the mystic interested in the scientific method. Believe me, that's a lot harder than getting scientists interested in extrasensory phenomena."

"*It is?*" Bedford Quinn felt baffled. "How so?" He felt a lecture coming on, so he signalled to Doris, who was still polishing a dry plate, for a can of beer.

"Certainly it is," said Van Wyck. "A scientist is willing to accept proof, even when he doesn't believe in a hypothesis. The mystic doesn't believe that scientific methods can ever discover the working laws of—er—shall we say, the supernatural."

Doris handed him the beer, and Bedford said: "I just reread your article in *Scientific American,* Doctor. A year ago, you thought ESP was all hooey. What changed your mind?"

VAN WYCK chuckled. "We can all make mistakes, especially when we don't have proper data. After having seen definite proof of the existence of extrasensory phenomena, I must admit that my thinking has changed. I've seen the error of my ways, you might say."

"Have many other well-known men become interested in this?"

"Several." Van Wyck named names, and again Bedford was amazed. "Naturally," he went on, "we're not doing a lot of advertising on this; we don't want our files cluttered up with a lot of screwball stuff. But anyone who is genuinely interested in psionic phenomena is welcome; and men such as yourself, who have a good, solid, educational background, and are actually doing successful work, can have access to our research files.

"Naturally, we'd like to see your work, too."

"You're welcome any time," Bedford Quinn said dazedly.

Arrangements were made for a demonstration, and Quinn finished his beer at the same time he finished the conversation. Doris handed him another as he cradled the phone.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said thoughtfully.

"What was that all about?" Doris wanted to know.

He told her and ended up with, "...I don't know how it

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happened, but someone has really got these boys interested."

THE NEXT several weeks were busy ones. The demonstration of the apparatus was quite successful, and one of the men who came to watch commented on a similarity in structure to other psionic devices. Quinn began to read outlines of the varied attempts of others, and the various theories propounded to account for the phenomena in an attempt to nail them down.

One thing Bedford began to notice, however, was the high praise that many of the men of the men who came to watch had for the machine of a certain Mr. Dudley MacIntosh. But he never got any inkling of what the machine itself did. Mr. MacIntosh, it seemed, was not yet ready to publish his results. Bedford was mildly curious at first, and then his curiosity was no longer mild. It turned out that every major-league scientist recently become interested in psionic work had become interested after seeing Dudley MacIntosh's machine.

Meanwhile, he concentrated on writing out a report of his own, explaining the whys and wherefores of his own device as best he could. When it was finished, he sent it to Dr. Van Wyck; it eventually was printed up and sent out to others—at Bedford Quinn's expense.

But his curiosity about the Dudley MacIntosh affair came to a head on the day that Dr. Lyman Kent knocked diffidently at his door.

WHEN HE opened the door, he was a little surprised, but he tried not to show it. "Come in, Dr. Kent."

"Thank you, Mr. Quinn." There was a half-embarrassed smile on his round face, and his mild hazel eyes were almost apologetic. "I'd like to talk to you about that device of yours. I read your report on it, and I'm beginning to see why it's difficult to check on such things. Uh—well, frankly, I'm quite interested. I thought, perhaps, that I might be able to help you. I know I sounded rather—uh—well, narrow-minded last month, and maybe I am. But there definitely seems to be something here worth investigating."

"Doris!" Bedford yelled. "Bring some beer! Two cans!" Then he looked at the little physicist. "You do drink beer?"

"Love it," said Kent, unbuckling his trenchcoat.

Bedford took the coat and traded it to Doris for the two cans of beer. He handed one to Kent and waved him to the

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easy chair, then he pulled up a dining room chair and lit a cigaret.

"Have you seen Dudley MacIntosh's machine, Doctor?" Quinn asked bluntly.

Kent nodded. "Yes, as a matter of fact, I have. It's rather remarkable, in a way, but I think yours is much more impressive."

"What does his do?"

KENT RUBBED his nose with his thumb. "Well, it's a sort of interferometer, as far as I can tell. He causes a shift in the interference bands in the light from the green band of mercury 198."

Bedford started to say that he didn't think that was so impressive, but he suppressed the remark. "I'd like to see it sometime."

Kent frowned at his beer can. "You'd have to arrange it through Dr. Van Wyck. MacIntosh won't let just anyone see it. There have been several requests, I understand, and most of them have been refused. But you just might be able to get to see it. He seems to be a very secretive sort of man. All the rest of the men in this project seem to be quite willing to discuss their work, but not Dudley MacIntosh."

Bedford flexed his long fingers and thought. "Well, I'll see if I can't talk him into letting me see it," he said at last. "Meanwhile, you wanted to talk about my work—right?"

"Right," agreed Kent.

BEDFORD didn't get around to calling Van Wyck until the next afternoon. The Ph. D.'s secretary put him on the line immediately.

"How are you, Mr. Quinn? How's the project coming along?"

"Quite well, Doctor," Bedford said. "Dr. Kent thinks he can not only instrumentize the apparatus, but can detect the energy that's causing the motion. I'm not as sure as he is, but we can at least try."

"Fine, fine. Was there anything else?"

Bedford took a deep drag off his cigaret. "Yeah. I wonder if I could get a look at the work Mr. Dudley MacIntosh has done. I understand I'd have to contact you."

VAN WYCK went through one of his pauses. "I'm afraid not," he said finally. "Mr. MacIntosh says that he doesn't want anyone to see the apparatus unless he, personally, invites them. He's—ah—rather reclusive about his work." There was another pause. "As a matter of fact, just between the two of us, I'd say that Mr. MacIntosh is somewhat of a snob."

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"Snob?"

"Well, perhaps that's too strong a word, really. But I've noticed that he's only invited men who are—uh—well-known, shall we say, in science.

"One of these days, I'll have to let you see the letter he wrote me when he wanted me to look at his apparatus. It's really awfully funny. He offered to pay a hundred dollars if I wasn't convinced by his work. It's a rather challenging letter, actually. Naturally, the offer of a hundred dollars for simply saying I thought he was a phony was, I'll admit, rather tempting." Van Wyck chuckled self-consciously.

"But you didn't collect?"

"Of course not! When shown indisputable proof of a natural law, only a thief would try to collect money by lying!"

Bedford looked at the tip of his cigaret. "Then I can't see MacIntosh?"

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Quinn. He's informed me that if he wants to see anyone he'll ask them himself. I'm sorry."

"That's OK," Bedford said. "Thanks, anyway, Dr. Van Wyck." He cradled the phone and sauntered into the kitchen.

Doris was curled up in the breakfast nook, absorbed in a copy of *Charm*. She looked up as Bedford opened the refrigerator. "Open me one, too. So you can't get an appointment with this MacIntosh?"

BEDFORD pressed the sharp point of the opener into two cans of beer before answering. "*'Curioser and curioser,' said Alice,*" he quoted. "I wonder why he's so exclusive?"

"Who knows? Is his name in the phone book?"

"Nope. That was the first thing I checked. He—"

The phone rang.

Bedford went out to answer it, and Doris looked back at her magazine. She could hear his voice from the living room.

"Who? I see...I'm glad you liked it...I'd like to very much... Certainly... Yeah, I can make it then... All right ...I understand... Very well; goodbye." There was a click as he hung up. He came back into the kitchen with a dazed look on his lean face.

"That was MacIntosh," he said. "I'm to be at his house tomorrow afternoon at five."

THE MACINTOSH residence was out on Long Island, a custom-built ranch-type house on a magnificently landscaped half-acre lot near Manhasset. Bedford Quinn pulled his Buick into the driveway and mentally estimated that the place had cost at least fifty thousand. He climbed out of the car and

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walked up to the front door.

There was no need to push the bell button; the door was opened by a man whom Bedford immediately knew was Dudley MacIntosh.

He was of average height and inclined toward portliness, though he could not at all be called fat. His hair was dark and wavy, with traces of gray at the temples. He had the sort of eyes that are usually described as "twinkling blue", but there was more behind them than simple good humor.

They were overshadowed by vast, bushy brows that would have been a credit to John L. Lewis. His mouth was generous, and curved in a lopsided smile that gave him the appearance of a happy demon.

"Ah! Mr. Quinn!" His handshake was warm and friendly without being too much on the "hail-fellow-well-met" side. He took Bedford's hat and coat, hung them in a hall closet, and waved him into a broad, spacious living room. A huge fireplace flickered with a fire that chuckled happily to itself.

He pointed toward one of the three overstuffed chairs that faced the fire. "Sit down, Mr. Quinn. What do you drink? Bourbon? Gin? Wine? Ale? Anything you want."

"Ale sounds good," Bedford said, easing himself into the chair.

"Ale it is," MacIntosh said, and disappeared into the kitchen. He came out a moment later with a foam-topped beer shell. "I never drink before demonstrating my apparatus," he explained. "Dulls the brain or something. Doesn't always work." Then he frowned. "Come to think of it, though I might as well have some ginger ale to be sociable."

HE WENT into the kitchen again and came out with a tall tumbler of ginger ale. He sat down in a chair facing Bedford Quinn. Then he reached out to a nearby table, picked up a pair of spectacles rimmed with black plastic and adjusted them on his face. At the same time, his other hand picked up a sheaf of paper which Quinn recognized as the printed edition of his own report.

"This is a very interesting report, Mr. Quinn," he said as he leafed through it. "In fact, I think it's the most convincing demonstration of psychokinesis I've ever heard of. No one that I know of even approaches you. And you've expounded a very believable theory here—about how the magnetic fields focus the mental force on the converted radiometer. Tell me—" He dropped

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the paper to his lap and looked at Bedford. "—how does it feel? Subjectively, I mean."

Bedford shrugged a little. "I don't know. I've tried to explain it, but there are no words for it in English. You've got to have the concept before it can be explained thoroughly.

"I've tried explaining it to my wife, but it's like explaining a dream. Any explanation is merely a verbal abstract of what really happened."

MacIntosh pursed his lips a little. "Let's assume that I know what you mean. You know that *grasping out* feeling? That impression of stirring a heavy liquid? That feeling of urgency?"

BEDFORD did, and he was startled. The man's description was a great more accurate than his own had ever been. "I know exactly what you mean."

"Very well. We'll assign it a nonsense word. Let's use the verb to 'gwill' it. Decline it as 'gwill', 'gwilled', 'gwilled'. The adjective is 'gwilled', and can't be compared, any more than you can compare 'perfect', or 'daily'. A thing is either *'gwilled'* or it isn't. How's that? Make sense?" He chuckled.

Bedford laughed. "I'll buy that, Mr. MacIntosh."

"Call me Dudley. What do they call you?"

"Quinn, usually. 'Bedford' is a little clumsy; even my wife usually evades it. She calls me 'honey' or 'dear' or 'sweetheart'."

"Quinn will do," MacIntosh said, grinning lopsidedly. "The others might be misunderstood."

"Very well, then. Would you like to see how I *gwill?"* Without waiting for an answer, he stood up and walked toward the kitchen. "My lab's in the basement. Come along."

Bedford followed him through the big, bright kitchen to a door that led down into the lower depths of the house.

The apparatus filled the center of a fairly large room. Bedford tried to calculate what the maze of equipment had cost, and gave up. It at least ran into five figures.

"Sit down over there," MacIntosh said, pointing to a chair bolted to the floor. "Put your eyes to the binoculars."

BEDFORD took off his glasses and put his eyes up to the rubber-padded double eyepieces. They fit comfortably, so he leaned back and waited while MacIntosh warmed the equipment up.

After throwing several switches and adjusting several controls, MacIntosh said:

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"Okay. Now look. The focussing knobs are on the side."

Bedford leaned forward and peered through the eyepieces. At first, all he saw was a green blur; but by adjusting the focus, he soon saw the characteristic pistol-target rings of an interference pattern.

"I've got it."

"Okay. Now watch the interference bands."

Bedford watched. The bands began to ripple; at first the rings seemed to collapse in on each other, then they expanded outward. After several seconds, they stabalized and became motionless.

"Well?"

At the sound of MacIntosh's voice, Bedford Quinn realized that the show was over. Slowly, he lifted his head from the binocular eyepiece. His host was grinning at him.

"Well?" he asked again. "What do you think?" His blue eyes were really sparkling.

BEDFORD hardly knew what to say. It was probably the greatest disappointment in his life. It took him several seconds to get up nerve enough to say: "Frankly, I don't get it. Is that all there is? I—I mean..."

The grin broadened. "You mean it was unimpressive? Ah! That was because it *isn't* impressive. I didn't *gwill*, you see. Now try it again. Watch!"

Again Bedford Quinn put his eyes to the binocular. And, as he watched, he felt the majestic flow of power—power that could move planets, extinguish suns, change energy, and obliterate matter soundlessly. It was a feeling of infinite motion and infinite knowledge, of absolute sympathy and total compassion.

And the interference rings rippled in and out.

Bedford Quinn lifted his head at last and looked full into the intelligent blue eyes of the man who stood over him. "I see," he said softly. "You're a phony. The most magnificent phony the world has ever known."

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that," MacIntosh demurred. "Let's go upstairs and have a drink. This time, I think I'll take a little bourbon."

THE TWO of them sat in the overstuffed chairs before the fireplace, watching the ever-changing pattern of the firelight. Each man held a small glass of excellent bonded bourbon in his hand. MacIntosh tamped a heavy briar with tobacco while Bedford

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lit a cigaret. "The machine is a phony, isn't it?"

"Of course it is, my friend. But it has enough science behind it to convince the physicists—for a while, at least."

"Does it actually serve any purpose? Or is that feeling caused by you and you alone?"

"I need the machine," MacIntosh admitted. "The whole purpose of that interferometer gadget is to get the subject in the proper focus. That's why the chairs bolted to the floor."

BEDFORD QUINN looked at the clear sparkle of the whiskey and rubbed a forefinger along his pencil-line mustache. "It's a matter of faith, isn't it?"

"Not exactly," said his host. "It's a matter of allowing oneself to believe. I can't *gwill* psychokinetically, you see. I can't do anything like what you do—can't even influence dice; I get the nicest statistical average you'll ever see. I'm up one minute and down the next. I just don't *feel* matter. But emotions—ah! That's something different.

"I've known that psionics was real for years; but I also knew that PK alone would never convince anyone."

Bedford thought of Dr. Kent and silently agreed.

"Besides," MacIntosh continued, "I couldn't convince them that way. On the other hand, I knew that the hard-trained, logical brain of a scientist would have to *think* he had been convinced by PK. The machine is a phony, of course; I don't think I could have fooled you, even if I had used my—ah—ability on the first run. You see, you *already* believed in the existance of psionic phenomena; I couldn't impress you that way. Besides, you were able to detect the flow of psionic power and recognize it for what it was; and you could also detect its absence. Frankly, Quinn, I'm happy to know you."

Bedford Quinn sipped at his whiskey. "Then all you did was break down the hard-held resistance to believing? You didn't hypnotize them?"

"NOT AT ALL. Remember, scientific training insists that one be able to change one's mind when confronted with irrefutable proof. I presented them with that proof. Even though they couldn't recognize it, they accepted it because—unlike your PK work—I was working on *them* instead of on a piece of matter.

"But I've had to be very selective in the persons to whom I showed my apparatus. Only the rigidly scientific

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mind can be affected by it. The person who already *knows* that such energies exist, detects them sooner or later and proves that my machine is phony."

Bedford rolled the warm liquor around his tongue appreciatively. "Tell me, Dudley, why did you show me?" Why did you let me know you were a fake?"

Dudley MacIntosh grinned hugely. "Isn't it obvious, Quinn, old man? *I* can convince 'em, *you* can demonstrate to 'em. Between the two of us, we ought to be able to build a gadget that will start research all over the world.

"Our Lord said: *'Know thyself.'* If we can get people to do that—and I think we can, the two of us—we can't ask for a better life."

In the flickering of the firelight, Bedford Quinn's lean face creased in a satisfied smile. "I think you're right, Dudley; I think you're right."

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READIN' and WRITHIN'

BOOK REVIEWS by Randall Garrett

GROUNDWORK FOR SPACE TRAVEL

HIGH SPEED FLIGHT by E. Ower and J. L. Nayler; 127 pp., 100 photographs, drawings, graphs, and tables; Philosophical Library, $10.00.

That price may look stiff, but the book is worth it. Physically, it is well-bound, and is printed in clear type on heavy, glossy paper. The publishers know that this kind of book has to stand years of hard usage by those who buy it. It is a reference work on the problems of high speed and supersonic flight, and, according to the jacket blurb, "contains information not hitherto released for general publication."

The authors know their subject; Ower was once the Secretary to the Scientific Advisory Council of the British Ministry of Supply, and Nayler is at present the Secretary of the Aeronautical Research Council. Both Englishmen have a nice list of those exclusively British letters after their names: E. Ower, B.Sc., A.C.G.I., F.R.Ae.S.; J.L. Nayler, M.A., F.R.Ae.S., F.I.A.S. And you don't get to be a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society by being ignorant about aircraft.

The subject matter is covered thoroughly, beginning with the simple fundamentals of flight and the behavior of air at subsonic and supersonic speeds, through the materials and structures used in building high velocity aircraft and the engines needed to power them, to the human problems involved—both physical and psychological—in high altitude, high acceleration flight. It winds up with an account of the research that is being done—and has yet to be done—with aircraft and guided missiles, and a discussion of the space satellite problem.

As a reference work on high-velocity aircraft, I recommend it without reservation.

HIGH-LEVEL FUN

THE ENJOYMENT OF MATHEMATICS by Hans Rademacher and Otto Topelitz

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Princeton University Press; 204 pp.; $4.50.

This is, as far as I know, the first English translation of *Von Sahlen und Figuren: Proben Mathematischen Denkens fur der Mathematik,* originally published in Germany in 1933. (Germans have *such* fun naming books!)

It consists of twenty-eight chapters, apparently arranged pretty much at random, each discussing an interesting phase of mathematics.

Such things as the sequence of prime numbers, the theory of sets, the four-color problem, Fermat's theorem, perfect numbers, and curves of constant breadth are dealt with lucidly and briefly.

A word of warning, however; the book is subtitled "Selections from Mathematics for the Amateur". The word "amateur" is used here in the same way that one describes a Golden Gloves champion as an "amateur boxer"—he doesn't get paid for it. According to the jacket blurb, the book requires "no more mathematical background than most people acquire in high school (plane geometry and elementary algebra)". Here we have a perfect example of the queer sort of modesty most mathematicians seem to have. "It's easy for me," they say, "so it ought to be easy for everyone."

Plane geometry and elementary algebra are all the *tools* you'll need, but you'd better have a knowledge of how to use them in connection with abstract mathematical thought. If you do, you'll enjoy *"Enjoyment".*

A SAMPLE OF SCIENCE WITH A SOUPCON OF SLAPSTICK

A SCIENTIFIC SAMPLER, edited by Raymond Stevens, Howard F. Hamacher, and Alan A. Smith; 413 pp.; Van Nostrand, $6.00

The reseach company of Arthur D. Little, Inc. is composed of men who have that which is too often rare in the scientific world—a sense of humor. It was they who published the delightful little paper some years ago which described, in detail, the construction and operation of the "turboencabulator". When I read it, I was halfway through the first paragraph before I realized I was being had. It predates Dr. Asimov's "thiotimoline" as an example of meaningless scientific doubletalk, disguised as a serious article.

The *Sampler* isn't doubletalk; it is sound stuff. But it consists of essays selected from a "trade paper" published by Arthur D. Little, Inc.—the *Industrial Bulletin.* And even

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when these men are being scientifically sober and accurate, they have a tendency to flavor their writings with wonderful touches of wit.

An article on an air-conditioned, semi-automatic baby crib developed by Dr. B. F. Skinner, of Indiana University, is entitled—what else?—*Heir Conditioner*. Another, on the subject of the neural hookups of the olfactory receptors in the nose is called *Information Scenter*. In the section on Minor Vices, there is an article on wine called *Via the Grapevine*.

The articles themselves contain a wealth of varied information, covering almost every subject under the sun—from Anthropology to Zoology, and including every science that begins with the letters in between.

The *Scientific Sampler* is a colorful, imaginative, informative, and thoroughly delightful book. Grab a copy.

MASSES IN THE COLD, COLD GROUND

THE DESCENT OF PIERRE SAINT-MARTIN by Norbert Casteret; 160 pp., 17 pp. of photographs, 2 maps; translated by John Warrington; Philosophical Library, $4.75.

The question of whether speleology (cave exploring) is a science or not is a long—although not too hotly—debated subject. Although a good many scientific discoveries have been made by speleologists, most of them indulge in the pastime mainly for adventure; and if the vote were mine, I'd classify it as a sport.

This book certainly has a sporting air about it. The author, M. Casteret, is well-known in French scientific circles; he is a member of the Academie Francaise, the Academie des Sciences, the Academie des Sports, and the Academie des Jeux Floraux—which completely exhausts the list of French Academies. His story is that of the exploration of the cavern of Pierre Saint-Martin in the Py-

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renees Mountains, just over the French border, in Spain.

Without the original to compare it with, I can't be a good judge of the original author's writing style; but I more than half suspect that the narrative was somewhat hashed up in translation. In spite of that, part of the author's message does get through.

M. Casteret manages, albeit often with difficulty, to depict the excitement of descending into and exploring a cave hitherto unexplored by man. This particular shaft was first discovered by Max Cosyns, who called it the deepest shaft hitherto discovered. He was right, as later exploration proved. The shaft itself drops down more than eleven hundred feet before it turns horizontally, to become a series of caverns that still slant steeply downward. At the deepest explored part (as of 1954), the cavern is nearly twenty-four hundred feet beneath the surface.

There are tragic moments in the book, and poignant ones. In 1952, one of the explorers, while being lowered down the shaft on an electrically driven winch, had an accident. Unfortunately, the man, Marcel Loubens, was a good friend of M. Casteret. The author, with an overflow of Gallic emotion, simply says: "I cannot bring myself to set down what happened after (he started down)." And he doesn't. All we know is that M. Loubens lay suffering and in pain for thirty-six hours at the bottom of that shaft, 1300 feet below the surface, before he finally succumbed. The details are in the Appendix, in the form of a clipping from *The Times*.

Loubens was buried there; his body remained in the icy depths of the cavern for two years before it was finally brought to the surface, still well preserved, in the summer of 1954.

Surprising people seem to be interested in speleology. One of the explorers was Father Jaques Attout, who might be

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called the chaplain of the group of men who spent four years exploring the cavern. Fr. Attout was not only their spiritual guide on the surface—plus additional help with water-carrying, cooking, and dishwashing—but he actually descended into the shaft to explore and to offer a Mass for the repose of the soul of Marcel Loubens.

The actual story of the exploration takes up the first ninety-eight pages of the book. The rest of it is concerned with various other caves and the wonders to be found in them.

To be honest, I think the book is poorly put together. If it were better organized, it would be a really stirring narrative; as it is, it barely escapes being dull. As far as organization goes, I *know* I can blame it on the translator; he admits rearranging the book in his "Translator's Note". I suspect he juggled more than just the chapter arrangements; it hardly seems to me that M. Casteret could become a member of all four Academies and not be able to write any better than this.

Still, if you *like* exploring caves—well, go ahead, buy the book. You can't lose more than $4.75 and a little time.

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DOWN TO EARTH

THIS DEPARTMENT is for you, our readers, and is a vehicle for airing your opinions. We shall publish as many letters in each issue as space allows, and it makes no difference whether they are complimentary, or whether the editor is lambasted for what you think was an error of judgement in selecting stories. If you want to argue with an author, or with other letter-writters, here is an open forum for you.

While the editor may comment upon a given opinion, and may express one or two of his own at times, this is your department, and you have the last word. And whether your letter is published or not, rest assured that your opinions are read carefully and taken into consideration. All suggestions for improvement are welcome, and we will follow them wherever feasible.

QUESTION OF ROTATION...

Dear Mr. Silverberg:

In your story, "Solitary" (which by the way, I thought was excellent), you say that Bellatrix 1 was similar to Mercury, except for the fact that Bellatrix 1 "rotated quite nicely on its axis".

Thereby hangs a question. For years there has been an argument in my family as to whether the Moon rotates on its axis. I say it does—my father says it doesn't...and since Mercury-Sun is in the same relative situation as Moon-Earth in that respect, I would like very much to know your thinking as regards the above quotation, from which I infer that Mercury does *not* rotate on its axis.

Here's the way I see it.

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Mercury rotates on its axis *exactly once* for every revolution around the sun. If it did *not* turn upon its axis as it revolves, a given point upon its surface would forever be facing in the same direction. As it is, any given point on Mercury's surface "faces" *all* directions during the course of one revolution around the sun. In my opinion, there are two distinct motions involved—that of rotation and that of revolution—which take place simultaneously. Theoretically, to eliminate one of the motions—that of revolution—would be to see the planet rotate upon its axis while not changing its position in space.

Or, to take it the other way around, if you were to construct a moving model of Mercury's orbit aound the sun, you would have to construct a globe representing Mercury so that it would be capable of turning on itself as it moved along its track—or, better still, if you were told to construct a model of a body making one complete revolution around another, while simultaneously rotating once on its axis, the model would of necessity be exactly the situation of Mercury-Sun or Moon-Earth. How else would that be accomplished?

But—and here's where I have *my* doubts—if *one* such rotation is not really *rotation*—if "rotation," as it is commonly used, means "spinning under its own power", momentum really, *away* from the more powerful body—then I see your point and the clue is in "nicely". But I'm not at all sure, and I'd be very interested to hear from you in regard to this, if you can take the time to write.

RHODA GRANANT, Miami Beach Florida

...ANSWERED

Dear Miss Granat:

You're absolutely right: Mercury *does* rotate on its axis—quite nicely, indeed. Its period of rotation is exactly that of its period of revolution, 88 days; even though it keeps the same face to the sun at all times, you're correct that its motion is indeed both revolution and rotation, one latter during each former.

I'm afraid I'll have to plead guilty to an imprecision of language in the story under discussion. What I meant to say, and didn't, in describing Bellatrix 1, was that its period of rotation *was less than* its period of revolution (as on Earth, which rotates on its axis every 24 hours and revolves around its primary every 365-odd days) and so presented each hemisphere to its sun during the course of a year. It's

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proper to say that Mercury *does* rotate on its axis, and I ask absolution for not having made clear in print a concept that was perfectly clear in my mind.

ROBERT SILVERBERG

ON "LOGIC"

Dear Mr. Lowndes:

I was much interested in your editorial in No. 32 *Future Science Fiction*. It is remarkable because of a spirit of sober common sense, together with unprejudiced love of truth. This is notably different from the usual editorial production: the setting up of a straw man for a meticulous dissection and annihilation. It is possible to ignore *obiter dicta* showing ignorance or prejudice in certain important matters; but it is impossible to ignore a consistent policy of misrepresentation, involving not only repeated editorials but even innumerable works of fiction enrolled in the dissemination of the same misinformation. (I am thinking particularly of the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction.)*

I am referring to the widespread and most persistent attacks on the science of Logic with never a word admitted in defense of that powerful tool of the intellect. Once before I wrote to an editor of a science fiction periodical—entirely in vain, for I did not even receive a reply. I do not remember the name of the periodical nor of the editor; but I have noted that such periodicals continue to misrepresent the science of Logic, as if they were acquainted only with such caricatures of the same as are found among mathematical texts.

If you are as sincere and distinterested in other matters as you appear to be regarding criticism, I think that you will admit the validity of the principle that *no one should attempt a public attack on an ancient and recognized intellectual discipline without producing convincing evidence of a thorough understanding of what has been said in its defense.*

One unjustifiable line of attack, which is far too prevalent, is to find fault with Logic for not doing what it is not intended to do and makes no claim to do—as if one were to condemn the razor blade for inefficiency in felling redwoods! Thus Logic is blamed for not proving first principles or providing premises.

A second unjustifiable line of attack, also extremely prevalent, is to represent logical reasoning as something which can be accomplished by a machine. As a matter of fact (easily verifiable by consult-

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ing such well known authors as Maritain or Coffey—to mention a few whose writings are available in English, whether as originals or as translations), one of the outstanding principles of Logic is that the middle term must not merely be expressed by the *same word*, but must use that word *in exactly the same sense* in each premise. This immediately *excludes mere mechanical manipulation* from true logical procedure.

A third unjustifiable line of attack, which seems to be in evidence many times a year, is the utterly fallacious violation of the law that there should be only *one* middle term . This violation consists in the employment of the word *Aristotelian* in two different senses. In one sense it is used to suggest the comparatively undeveloped state of Logic at the time when Aristotle died. In the other sense it is used to characterize anything built on the work of Aristotle. This may be presented as follows:

> All Aristotelian Logic (Logic at the time of the death of Aristotle) is behind the times.
>
> All Logic as presented by the scholastic writers who are most competent today is Aristotelian Logic (Logic built on the work of Aristotle).
>
> Therefore, all Logic as presented by the scholastic writers who are most competent today is behind the times.

This type of fallacy is technically known as the *logical quadruped* or *fallacy of four terms*, and it is clearly explained in any reputable work on Aristotelian Logic of today.

I am afraid that to request you to read an exposition of Logic on the highest level by such a recognized and competent scholar as Maritain would be too much to ask; but perhaps I might hope that you could be persuaded to use your influence, as far as it extends, to resist the campaign of misinformation and misrepresentation which seems to have secured such an inviolable stronghold in the science fiction periodicals.

ALAN C. BATES
Chicago, Illinois

To my way of thinking, there are two extremes to be avoided. One is the virtual worship of "logic" without realization of its limitations or, possibilities of its abuse. Most of the people I have encountered, who show undue reverence toward "logic", have also been quite innocent of the fact that sheer nonsense can be worked out exquisitely through a rigorous use of the "rules of logic". This happens when the initial premises

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are not valid, and/or the working-out consists of the kind of manipulation you mention—using the same word in a different sense at different times in the process. Such "logicians" often display alarming symptoms when you try to show them that something may not be so, just because it's "logical".

The other extreme is total rejection of "logic" in protest against common abuses. It has well been written that the abuse of anything whatsoever doth not impeach its rightful use. I, myself, am inclined to be suspicious when presented with a beautiful chain of logic that stretches to a shining conclusion. I want to know, first of all, exactly what the original premise was; second, whether the key terms have been used in different meanings during the process, through subtle shifts in the level of abstraction within the same general meaning, or used in a sense which made an entirely different meaning.

It's usually dangerous to predict human behavior—on the individual or group level—through logical reasoning; some people may reason logically, they rarely act according to logical conclusions. Note that I said "rarely"—*not "never"*!

Many people consider the Null-A systems as an attack upon "logic"; this is not so at all. The Null-A systems, when used correctly—for they, like anything else man has invented, are capable of being misused—include Aristotelian "logic"; these systems indicate exactly where and how the Aristotelian is useful, where and how it is most commonly misused, and suggest processes for use where the Aristotelian system is inadequate for the job at hand. RAWL

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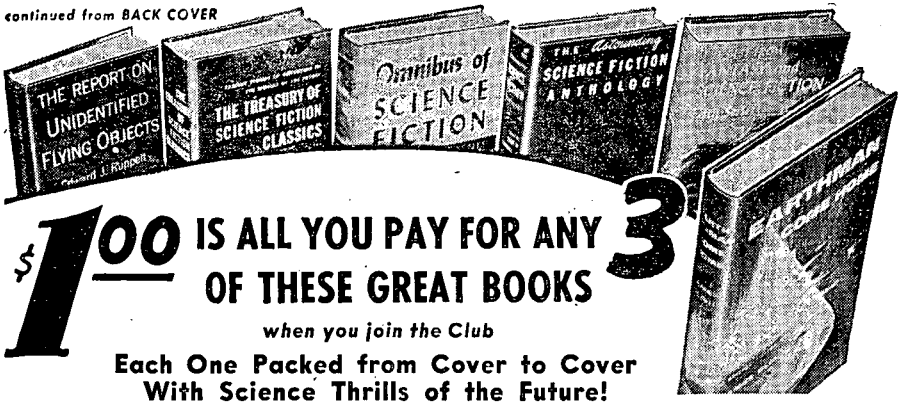
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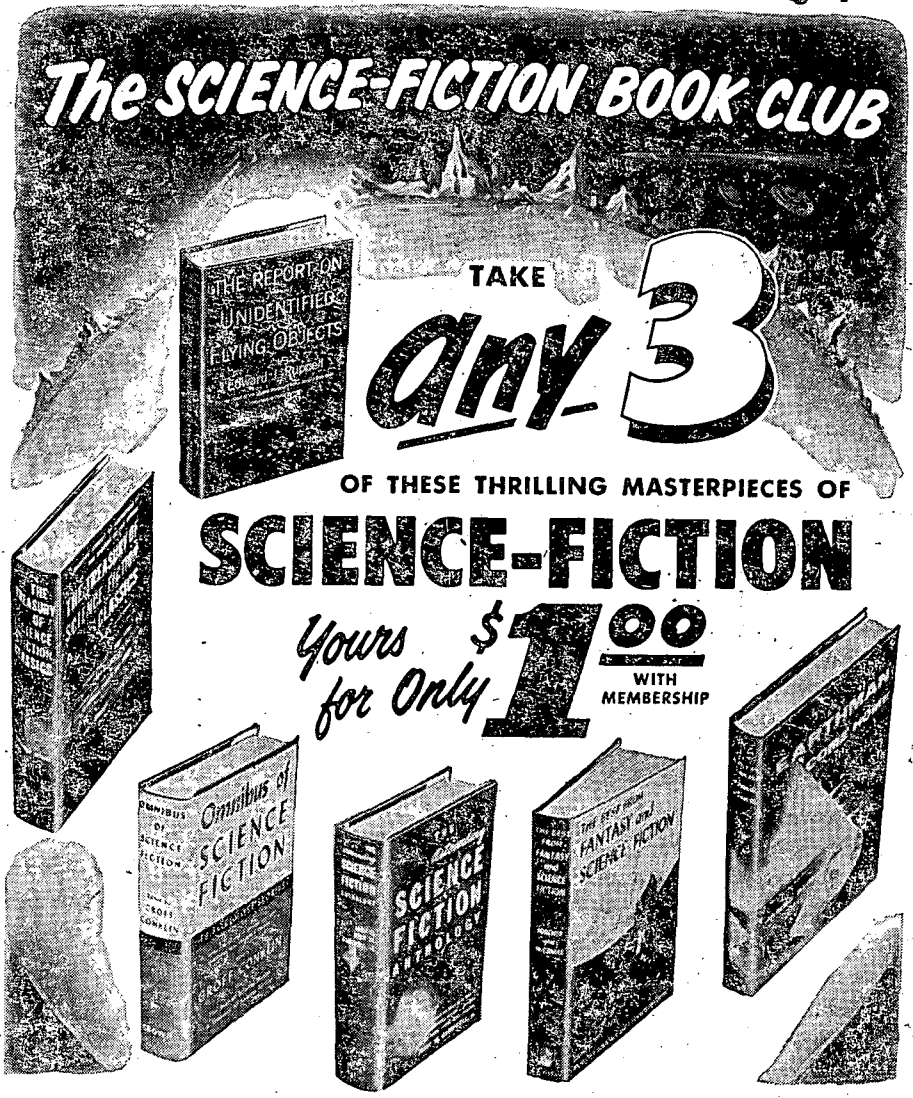
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